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DAYS OF THE DANDIES

MRS. JORDAN

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pathy was a benefit play at Liverpool on the 13th of the month. Holman delivered an address which Mr. Roscoe wrote for the occasion, of which, perhaps, the following tetrastic best merits preservation :

> "Not all that breathes in morning's genial dew
> Revives the parent plant, where once it grew;
> Yet may those dews, with timely nurture, aid
> The infant flow'rets drooping in the shade."

On the 18th, for that night only, Mr. Colman's company acted at the Opera House the "Heir at Law" and the "Children in the Wood," for the same kind purpose; and Drury Lane Theatre opened on the 15th of September, and to give the greater, or, indeed, the greatest attraction to the night, also destined for Palmer's orphans, the "Stranger" itself was the play, acted by Kemble and Siddons without accident, and Mrs. Jordan performed Maria in the "Citizen," to young Philpot by Bannister.

The audience, deeply penetrated by the story from Liverpool, was quite astonished to hear Kemble pronounce the fatal truism, "There is another and a better world," to his man Francis, as he had always done, and suspected him to have transposed the ominous line from the fourth act to the

second ; and there was a perceptible debate, *sotto voce*, in the house about it. But he played on, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, and his mind engrossed by the character. We now missed Palmer himself in the Baron, the first perception of a loss that extended through both tragedy and comedy, and which no man was so accomplished as to supply. The whole went off with the proper feelings, and the house was crowded to the very roof. I speak of Palmer with that respect that is excited in the breast of an author by zealous and honest service, and remember, with a melancholy pleasure, the leave he took of me before he quitted town. We were on the stage of Colman's theatre, where Barrymore and Charles Kemble were studying to become Palmers, rehearsing my play of "Cambro-Britons." Upon turning my head, I saw Mr. Palmer standing at the wing, and motioning to speak with me ; for he was too punctilious to interrupt the performers by coming upon the stage. I went toward him, and he drew me a little back from the view of the actors. He said that "he could not quit London without, in a particular manner, thanking me for the part of Schedoni, in the 'Italian Monk.' He expressed his concern that he could not aid me on

the present occasion, and, with very singular emotion, wished that I might always meet with men as sensible to kindness as he himself should ever be." He even wrung me by the hand, and took his leave precipitately and in tears. He had a reputation of polishing up such valedictions, and perhaps he might love to leave favourable impressions; and, but for his melancholy close, I might myself have reckoned this but a "trick of custom," but I still think there was more in it, and am apt to fancy that he was sorry to quit the theatre which for so many years he had sustained, and that his mind was shaken by some of those presentiments that accompany all changes when we lose the restless hilarity of youth.

Upon my own play of "Cambro-Britons," I shall say but one word, and that is, that it procured me the praise of Jackson, of Exeter, the enchanting composer of the "Canzonets." Mr. Kemble told me that he admired extremely the following speech of Shenkin, a character finely played by Munden:

"Though a mountaineer! 'Slife, girl, the mountain is the soil of all the virtues.
To the mountain independence clings, and heaven's best blessing — Liberty.

It is the fountain-head of goodness, and if the stream is ever muddy in its course through life, why, it is by working through the muck of cities in the valley."

He added, that he believed the illustration perfectly original. We may both be mistaken, but I, who wrote it, to the present hour believe so too.

I had no intention to give up the ghost, of which I had been the modern patron, even to Mr. Lewis's beautiful "Spirit of the Castle," but I ventured an improvement, with great success, and, instead of allowing the maternal shade to walk out, as a sort of ground-floor inhabitant, I fairly took her up, from the tomb out of which she rose, and carried her through the window of a chapel, while clouds of the loveliest forms rolled at her feet in the ascent, and gradually enveloped the figure during its progress to a purer region. But enough of such spectacles, the substitutes for character and passion, unworthy of the true poet, after the superstition which they revive has been dead and "buried, my good Tyrrel," past all reasonable redemption.

The first attempt at Drury Lane to supply some of Palmer's parts with a representative, was in the introduction of Mr. Powell, from the Norwich theatre, who acted Don Felix and young Wilding:

he was only respectable in either; and, instead of the remotest resemblance to John Palmer, he had the closest to Frank Aickin, in face and person, only less vigorous and impressive. Mr. Hoare now got up here a very clever version of the French "Camille, ou le Souterrein," with music by Dusseck, a man of genius; it was called the "Captive of Spilsberg;" but Mrs. Jordan had no part in it, for a very weighty reason, which operated against Mr. Cumberland's "Word for Nature" also, and Miss Biggs played the character which he designed for her — it was a comedy of five nights only. The theatre was in a dismal plight just now, for Mrs. Siddons had lost a most lovely daughter, by decline, at Clifton, and was too severely shaken to carry her attention, for some weeks, from her untimely grave.

Mrs. Siddons at length returned to the stage, and accepted a part in my "Aurelio and Miranda," which I had, unadvisedly, founded upon the romance of the "Monk," to give my friend Kemble an opportunity of personifying Lewis's Ambrosio. It, however, was only acted six nights, for the hue and cry against the romance, and its immorality, had roused every thing pious against the representation; and yet I had omitted the devil himself,

for the tempter, and given to Aurelio no stronger allurement than a disguised female, enamoured of his eloquence. Kemble acted inimitably, and Mrs. Powell did her best; for the rest, "nothing can come of nothing." I had done little, and they did less. Wroughton expressed his surprise that we were so persecuted, but Kemble, from the beginning, said only, "I will ensure the three first acts."

Mr. Colman was now to *rencherir*, as the French call it, upon his "Bluebeard," and in truth should have called the present offering "Blackbeard," on the warrant, not only of Monk Lewis's preface, but the dark excrement with which he had bechinned Mr. Barrymore in Ruthenwolf. This tyrant is so provoked with the resistance of Claribel, Mrs. Crouch, that he orders her to be married to a drunken porter, instead of which she is married to Mr. Kelly; for your author always looks to the private connections of his performers, and the piece was only a vehicle to indulge the known attachments in the theatre, of which other instances have before occurred to the reader. It was on the subject of Colman's second title, the "Banquet Gallery," that Wroughton was critically alarmed by the following letter from an antiquary; he

looked like Garrick when he received the famous note from Junius.

"SIR: — I see that a musical drama is announced to the public called 'Feudal Times, or the Banquet Gallery.' In ancient architecture gallery was understood to mean no otherwise than a long, narrow avenue on a story above ground leading to various apartments, as we see in travellers' inns, college halls, and over the side aisles of cathedrals, etc.

"In ancient times all repasts, banquets, or, more properly, feasts, were held in the halls of mansions, college-halls, as indeed we see the practice continued to this day, on very great occasions — Westminster Hall at a coronation, etc., every one remembering the old lines of

> "'Tis merry in the hall,
> When beards wag all.'

"This same wagging of beards is differently understood among antiquaries, some affirming it to be when the merry men were engaged in telling of jests and droll stories, others, that it was when they were employed in eating; and I ever found the eaters had the most partisans.

"The high veneration which I entertain for subjects relating to antiquity could not let me pass unnoticed so glaring an impropriety in title as the 'Banquet Gallery.' I have the honour to be, etc."

Colman soon satisfied him, I fancy, on this point of antiquity, for the whole piece was filled with anachronism, and gunpowder itself is the loudest he has employed. As to the "Gallery" (the antiquary was right), witness the picture galleries in some of the Tudor buildings, which are extremely narrow, and have the windows always on one side, and the portraits of the family possessing the mansion on the other, which thus, fortunately for the painters, you in vain endeavour to catch more than a glimpse of.

But at night, with the curtain up, our antiquary was yet more astonished. "My God! a commander of an armed force blowing his own trumpet! Gracious Heaven! why, that is a Roman habit, and that a Grecian helmet! — There goes James the First's ruff — and Charles the First's armour! — Shields of all shapes, crossbows like pickaxes; and (for the love of God, let me go!) a modern parade drum-major!"

The next novelty at this theatre was a very fair

comedy written by Morris, the barrister, called the "Secret," which made its first appearance on the 2d of March, 1799. The "Secret" is the cheating a young lady of her fortune by the Torrids and the Lizards, who appear to have cultivated their amiable propensity to plunder in India. On the arrival of Rosa in England with the Torrids, Lizard puts the "Secret" in action to obtain young Torrid for his daughter — the young gentleman is already in love with Rosa. The usual persecution ensues, and Rosa bethinks herself of a letter written by her mother to a Lady Esther Dorville, whose husband was actually the father of Rosa by another lady, whom parental cruelty had torn from his arms and conveyed out to India. All this, as Mrs. Jordan remarked, was "quite usual on the stage, whatever the world might say to it," and we laughed at Munden's criticism on such occasions, who would sit out a greenroom reading of two hours with a few contortions, as if his seat was uneasy to him, and then, with a face of astonishment, extinguish the poor author's vanity with, "My precious eyes, sir, but where's the comedy?"

The comedy here was in Miss Lizard, head teacher at Mrs. Monsoon's seminary for young

ladies destined to the India market. There was comedy in such an establishment. Rosa was but the weaker half of Mrs. Jordan, the young lady; but "where was the comedy?" Colman wrote an epilogue for her; one of those colloquies held from the stage with pit, box, and gallery, where particular persons are pointed at, whom the discerning Mr. Bull always turns himself about to discover. She rattled through it so very agreeably that she was obliged to repeat it, a compliment quite singular. It was about this piece, I remember, we had been speaking, when she told me she had another "East Indian" offered at her shrine, which she would trouble me to read. I did so, and we talked the piece over at her town residence in Somerset Street, Portman Square. She had not told me who was the author of the play. But there was that in it which merited consideration. I gave her my opinion frankly, and pointed out the indecorum of the interest. However, though not a moral play, it was written, evidently, I said, by a man of talent, and, as a benefit piece, preferable to an old one. Mrs. Jordan here in confidence informed me that the duke had taken the trouble to read it at her desire also, and that we agreed most decisively in

our opinions. She was in charming spirits, I remember, that morning, and occasionally ran over the strings of her guitar. Her young family were playing about us, and the present Colonel George Fitzclarence, then a child, amused me much with his spirit and strength; he attacked me as, his mother told me, his fine-tempered father was accustomed to permit him to do himself. He certainly was an infant Hercules. The reader will judge of the pleasure with which I have since viewed his career as a soldier, and I owe him my thanks for his instructive and amusing journey across India, through Egypt, to England, in the winter of 1817–18, which he dedicated to his late Majesty George the Fourth when prince regent. I shall here merely say that his fourth chapter in this work is written with great skill, and possesses that interest which arises from actual facts at critical periods; from difficulties surmounted by patience or exertion; abounding in the terrible and destructive, unexaggerated and minutely detailed. As a moving picture, this division of his work may, with advantage, stand a comparison with the best passages of those who travel to seek effects.

To return to the stage. Though I can but

rarely visit the other theatre in my present course, yet I will notice the first appearance of the "Birthday," on the 8th of April, and leave my feeble testimony to the exquisite acting of Munden and Fawcett, in Captain Bertram and Junk. It is the naval pendant to the military Toby and Trim, and one of the best delineations of human nature coloured by profession. We owe this, it appears, to the admirable Kotzebue, whom the lecturers affect to slight, when compared with the sound poets of the German theatre. It is a pity they do not name the plays that produce equal interest. But this we are in no danger of seeing done by any modern author, of whatever nation.

But the "Birthday" is not the only tribute paid by Kotzebue to the genius of Sterne. In his play of the "Peevish Man," we have Mr. Shandy himself, and his brother Toby, with even the name preserved. The use made of Sterne by dramatic authors, and the powerful scenes either of pathos or humour to be found in his "Tristram" and his "Journey," excite a curiosity as to what rank he might have attained had he cultivated the drama.

On the 22d of April, followed by the "Romp," Mrs. Jordan acted the "East Indian" for her benefit; it was a production of Lewis's, probably

written some time back, as well as a farce called the "Twins," which he gave to Bannister for his benefit. The comedy was put up a second time on the 1st of May, for the benefit of Mrs. Powell, when it was dropped till the next season; and no wonder, for the wonder of wonders, "Pizarro," was now in preparation — Kotzebue in his heroics, almost re-written by Sheridan himself, who so much valued the achievement as to put his name to it, and dedicate its publication to his second wife. It was first acted on the 24th of May. Sheridan had been labouring many months upon improvements, and the morning of the representation had not supplied the performers with the whole of the copy; they had prepared themselves, I believe, with the translation on which he operated, so that they could at least have ended as Kotzebue had done. However, I fancy his piecemeal supplies of the last act were in time. Now the truth was that he literally could not keep his box on the first night, from anxiety. He had no opinion of Mrs. Jordan in tragedy, though he admired her voice, and the nature that shone in her; but her name commanded his Cora, and he gave it. Mrs. Siddons did not appear to comprehend his intention — indeed, she was hardly ever

herself in a new character. My friend, Mr. Stuart, of Upper Harley Street, obliged me with an account of Sheridan and his feelings about the third night's performance of the play. He had many of the features of Voltaire.

"About the third night of 'Pizarro,' I went up into Sheridan's private box, or, rather, the box he was privately in with Richardson. The box was on the prince's side, up one flight of stairs, making a sharp angle toward the centre of the stage, one window looking obliquely toward the audience, the other behind upon the stage. My business was politics, but Sheridan was so deeply interested with what was going on ('Pizarro'), that I could not speak to him for a length of time. He repeated every syllable after each performer, counting poetically the measure upon his fingers, and sounding with his voice like a music-master, with a degree of earnestness beyond my power to describe. He was in the utmost ill-humour, shocked, almost stamping with anger at everything Mrs. Jordan said. With everything Kemble uttered, he was invariably delighted, clapping his hands with pleasure, like a child. With some passages by Mrs. Siddons he was charmed; at others

he was shocked, frequently stating to Richardson and me that 'This was the way the passage should be spoken,' and then repeating it in his own way. Upon his sometimes referring to Mrs. Siddons, Richardson said to him, with his Newcastle burr: 'Well, well, Sheridan, you should not be so impatient! You know, Kemble told you that after some time she would fall into it.' This struck me strongly as proof that Kemble was the greatest master of his art in his day, which I think he was (indeed, there cannot be a question on the subject), and that Mrs. Siddons played entirely from nature, which developed itself as soon as she was easy in the words and in the business. I have ever since had a lively remembrance of this occurrence as proving the existence of important features, different in their kind, in the unrivalled powers of these two great performers. D. S."

Without examining what it was about his Elvira that made Sheridan doubt whether Mrs. Siddons would fall into it, the best way will be to look into Kotzebue's scenes, and, drawing out her character for ourselves, ask whether Mrs. Siddons was like the abstraction we have made. Pizarro, ignorant and savage, was a swineherd, but his cour-

age won the heart of Elvira. She is ambitious and romantic. "Would not play false, and yet would wrongly win." She can smile at invasion, and triumph amid the bloody sacrifices of the field, so as she may be a viceroy's wife, and form the minds of a rude, that is, as she understands the world, an unchristian people. Her enterprise discovers to her the mistake she has committed. The virtues exist in man by a law of his nature; her prey is superior to the wolf that would destroy him. She finds Pizarro incapable of generous pity — the veil which her romance threw before her eyes is withdrawn. She hates him for her own false perception, and would destroy the man without pity as eagerly as she followed the hero incapable of fear. Whoever will assist her hatred is welcome to her person, and, like most enthusiasts, she detests the mean barbarity of her enemy, and copies his meanness by descending to murder even sleep itself. She is a virago by habit, and the sharpest argument in her anger is the dagger. In the original play her usual dress is the male, and she is masculine in everything.

Now, whatever might be thought of Siddons by Sheridan, I confess to me she seemed to have levelled here perfectly at the mark; and he was

obliged to the slight sophistry of her manner, by which she contrived to retain some little of her sex's sympathy. One jot more of Thalestris, and she would have been driven from the stage. Mrs. Siddons did lean to the Amazon in her dress, for she first appeared in a helmet with feathers — an innovation in our costume. It was with proper discernment, which he was neutral enough to possess, though Sheridan was not, that Kemble said to me, "My sister has made a heroine of a soldier's trull." If she did, it was her own work, for neither Kotzebue nor Sheridan had done it for her. As to Mrs. Jordan's Cora, he had paid little attention to her style if he imagined she could ever speak in the measured cadence of Mr. Kemble. It is impossible to exceed her in the admiration of that great actor; but she certainly never wished his system to prevail upon the stage, lest what we heard there should, in manner at least, resemble nothing heard anywhere else. She thought it showing off the poet rather than the character. The lines are all good verse, but why scan them all the time you are speaking them?

And this reminds me of that mighty creature Burke's opinion upon style in composition, which was drawn from him by the following circum-

stance. His friend, Arthur Murphy, had sent to him, as a present, his translation of the works of Tacitus, a writer of inimitable force and effect; but as his sense was profound, and his remarks far from obvious, he seems to have become the father of a style so curt and oracular that he needs meditation as much for the terms he uses, as the matter pressed upon our reflection. Mr. Burke thus expresses himself: "There is a style which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see farther advanced by the authority of a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude is to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper (such I must think it) in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

"From this feigned manner, or falsetto (as I think the musicians call something of the same sort in singing), no one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style; but whatever success the attempt may sometimes

have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity, and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language.

"It is true that when the occasion calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make 'ambition virtue.' But the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common. Tacitus and the writers of his time have fallen into that vice by aiming at a poetical style. It is true that eloquence in both modes of rhetoric is fundamentally the same; but the manner of handling is totally different, even where words and phrases may be transferred from the one of these departments to the other."

The judicious reader will have no difficulty whatever in applying the above delightful criticism to the declamation on our stage — he will see the occasional necessities for adopting a cadence removed from that of conversation, for the sake of eloquence, but see at the same time that such an innovation must not grow into practice. The poet's ambition (not always virtue) urges him continually to raise his matter by the melody of

numbers, and although blank verse, properly constructed, is not too far from usual language, yet, if the actor forces it into a song, and either moans it out in a uniform chant, or parades his words like military steps, in slow, quick, or double-quick time, as they tend to excite attention, or vehement applause to himself, he will interpret truly neither nature nor his author, but stamp his own character as a mannerist, and beget a false taste in his audience. Some of our old comedies, those of Shakespeare, Fletcher, Jonson, and Massinger, have much of the dialogue written in blank verse. I have always observed that the comic actors delivered it without an appearance of stiffness, and they appeared to be talking it as their natural speech, while their tragic brethren, in the same play, and in the same scene, assumed Burke's falsetto invariably, and with an air of superiority, too, which the very attempt forfeited altogether.

The fact is, that Sheridan's ear was made up to this artificial cadence in the drama. His own declamation was of the old school; and when you read either his "School for Scandal" or his "Critic," you discover the tune to which, like a composer, he had set every line in them. Accordingly, a natural actress, like Mrs. Jordan, was all

abroad in this antithetic and pointed speech; it did not suit her manner, and was against her judgment or her feeling, whichever you call it, and in Sheridan's opinion, which I know was a sincere one, she could not "speak a line" of Cora. But she felt the situations keenly, and played with as much zeal as could be wished. Kemble, in fact, had all that was really worth anything in the play, and with Charles Moor from the "Robbers" of Schiller, and his own favourite figures from the speeches against Hastings, the English cast of Rolla might be said to be greatly improved from its original condition by the labours of the great orator.

Sheridan knew his own value, and that a few lines from his pen, without the slightest relation to the subject of the piece, would be preferred to the apposite employment of any other pen. So King spoke a prologue about the "Bucephalus of Rotten Row," "insidiously provoking a caper," and other choice matters, and Mr. Lamb, advisedly in the epilogue, made Mrs. Jordan recapitulate the sorrows of the Stranger and Mrs. Haller, the no less tender truth of Rolla, and the maternal distraction of Cora, alike proceeding from the pen of the now industrious manager.

That was done with this play, that I do not

know to have been achieved in any other. With the single intervention of Thursday, the 30th of May, when the "Secret" and "Bluebeard" were acted, the health and strength of the performers lasted through thirty-one repetitions of "Pizarro," a piece of more than common difficulty, in the business merely of the stage. Sheridan had all his company now cordially with him, and could he, late as it was in his management, have even now weaned himself from politics, and turned his powers to the mere improvement of German plays, he had saved his property and himself alike from ruin.

Kemble, by his two efforts of the Stranger and Rolla, now might be said to command the management, if he chose it, I had almost said the theatre, and it was settled that he was, at all events, in September next, to resume the one, and make his proposals as to a share of the other. Wroughton, as a manager, had clearly no resources; he was diligent and manly, but he was inferior, both as an actor and a man of reading, to Kemble, and it seemed absurd that the latter should be in the company at all, unless he directed it. His brother Charles, too, was now of no slight consequence, either to the theatre or his brother. In the youthful husband of Cora, he had greatly distinguished

himself, and though not so heroic in his person nor so subtle in his art, too much frequently upon the strain, and rather pleasing than great, yet with no mean share of his family advantages, born for the stage, and naturally studious, he might be fairly set next to his brother, at whatever distance. It was always to be remarked that he never imitated him, either in the tone or cadence of speech, and in the action or display of the person he went upon a principle much less refined and picturesque.

We must not, in this article of "Pizarro," forget what was certainly the best part of it, the money it brought into the house. I think my old acquaintance, Peake, told me that I might fairly estimate its first season at £15,000. But for the credit of Sheridan's muse, I could have wished he had got the money without such an outrageous violation of good taste as the following precious morsel, in the rant of Elvira, which, observe too, is a soliloquy, that is, only solitary meditation. She has Pizarro in her mind.

"Thou, on Panama's brow, didst make alliance with the warring elements, that tore the silence of that horrid night; when thou didst follow, as thy pioneer, the crashing thunder's drift, and, stalking o'er the trembling earth, didst plant thy banner by the red volcano's mouth."

It is sanctioned, too, only by the very intelligible sentence in Kotzebue which follows:

"Thou, whom neither the terrors of the elements, nor the fury of the foe, were able to alarm."

But the mock heroic tempted him to wield the thunderbolt, or follow the drift, as his pioneer, and the result was mere fustian. He gave to his darling Rolla, however, his favourite figure, the soft incubation of the blood-stained vulture, which is ushered in by an appeal to nature, who never pleads in vain, something in the style of Sterne's apostrophe to sensibility. As this was calculated more especially for the peeresses' gallery, during the impeachment of Warren Hastings, respect to the most refined matrons of the land leads me to quote it — because, too, a bit of argument in the drama is a rare occurrence.

"Oh, holy nature! thou dost never plead in vain. There is not, of our earth, a creature bearing form, and life, human or savage — native of the forest wild, or giddy air — around whose parent bosom thou hast not a cord entwined, of power to tie them to their offspring's claims, and at thy will to draw them back to thee. On iron pinions borne, the blood-stain'd vulture cleaves the storm — yet is the plumage closest to her heart soft as the cygnet's down, and o'er her unshell'd brood the murmuring ringdove sits not more gently."

To be sure; because less warm maternal softness would not hatch the young of this blood-stained race. And if nature is to be termed holy on account of one instinct, the maternal, what is to be her epithet for the other, equally powerful, which condemns this vulture to be blood-stained, or unsustained at all.

"Draw them back to thee!"

Gross, unnatural flattery; their preservation is surely as dear to the goddess as their propagation; nay, the second cannot exist without the first. The make of the animal ascertains his food. The humanity of life is frequently absurd and affected.

If this meant anything in Westminster Hall, it was an apology for Indian government, for it showed how the elegant mothers of Leadenhall Street might, with the greatest gentleness, strain their young ones to bosoms equally soft, while they themselves were nourished by the blood and sweat of the unhappy peasant of Bengal, from whom they had wrested even "the very opium, in which he forgot alike his misery and his oppressors."

And something like this last line, I remember Burke himself to have written on the subject of Indian delinquency. However, he reasoned justly

on the premises, which Sheridan did not. The prettiness was all he cared about, and it seemed pretty. "Giddy air" was from Shakespeare, but not attaining his happiness.

> "Wilt thou, upon the high and giddy mast,
> Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains?"

CHAPTER II.

The Summer Theatre — Antiquary Assails the "Red Cross Knights" — Falls Foul of Poor O'Keefe's "Peeping Tom" — His Anachronisms — Colman Not to Be Moved by the Twaddler — The Winter Season of Drury Could Not Begin with "Pizarro" — Kotzebue's Monopoly of "Seduction" Gluts the Market — A Fable of This Kind Dished Up by Mrs. Inchbald, and Called the "Wise Man of the East" — Fable of the "East Indian," by Lewis — Miss Biggs Assumes Mrs. Jordan's Character, Zorayda — Mrs. Jordan's Confinement in December, at Bushy — How Managers Suffer by These Natural Impediments — Kemble without Heroines, Resorts to Monodrames — The Antiquary Admires His Richard, but Has a Long List of Errors in the Getting Up of the Play — France and Banting — King Henry Not Uncovered — The Missal to Throw after the Mayor and Aldermen — No Armour in the Play, but in the Mouths of the Actors — My Friend Elliston, the Real Patron of True Armour — His Three Splendid Suits — The Civic Festival — Gog and Magog — Kean — A *Basso-relievo* of Richard Dying Pointed Out to Him — Mrs. Jordan's Return to Drury.

THE Haymarket in the summer of 1799 was full of business, which I am not called upon particularly to notice, though I myself figured there among the authors who succeeded. The reader remembers the antiquary who troubled Mr. Colman's "Banquet Gallery" with

his presence; and, finding the manager, like Othello, not much moved, he resumed his visitations, simply as a sort of summer amusement, and submitted the "Red Cross Knights" of my late friend Holman to a review, which they were little calculated to sustain. Thus flushed with victory over the defenceless, he paid his respects to "Peeping Tom" at Coventry, and read poor blind O'Keefe a lecture upon the history of England. A few of his discoveries may amuse the reader, till we can return to the opening of Drury Lane, in September under a manager somewhat of an antiquary himself:

There was a proclamation at the Cross, Anno 1043, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, though Coventry was without one till the reign of Henry the Sixth — they jingle a peal of triple bobs for a leg of mutton and trimmings — an apothecary's pestle and mortar — Old Corporal Standfast — the clock struck twelve — knife and fork — smoking tobacco — wearing a hat, and thinking of a side-saddle, though, for three hundred years after Tom and his peeping, the fair dames of England rode astride like the men. All these high crimes and misdemeanours swelled the impeachment of the manager's archæology.

It would have been vain for any of us to plead the example of Shakespeare before such a censor — he would have told us that the bard of our early stage more than redeemed his errors by his excellence, and that those who were without his nature, his pathos, his humour, and his character, might at least be exact in the manners and customs of the age they dramatised. As to Colman, he called him a twaddler, and has always held that description of accuracy very cheap indeed. But my principal reason for referring to the antiquary, and his discoveries by peeping into Coventry, is to deliver an opinion which I have long entertained as to the cause of the very meagre entertainment which modern poets have afforded, when writing upon classical subjects. We cannot think like an ancient, for we live in a different world, and all the illustrations from manners, with the metaphors in language, are either unknown to the writer, or inapplicable to a modern people and language. If we write from ourselves, we are perpetually unlike either Greeks or Romans, and can say little that does not involve some solecism. If we assume to be ancients, our best studies leave us but half formed: we must shroud our want of particular knowledge under general terms, which do not paint

with sufficient force, — we must either be unlike the characters presented, or really resemble nothing in nature.

The winter season of Drury Lane might have been expected to open with "Pizarro," and run on with £500 houses, from the unparalleled success of that piece; but Mrs. Siddons was not ready till the beginning of December for Elvira; in the meantime Kemble himself did what "Hamlet," "Zanga," and his "Shylock" enabled him to effect unsupported, with the ghostly aid of the "Castle Spectre," and the usual importance of a "Secret."

We are now entered upon the most immoral period of the stage. Kotzebue had almost a monopoly of "Seduction," and as he monopolised also the whole dramatic talent, we had a succession of agreeable incidents best discussed in a court of justice, and the only unity of action recommendable is that of an action for damages. The reader will accept one of these fables, as Mrs. Inchbald improved it from the German of Kotzebue. Quite a jewel of a woman (as Foote would call her), a Lady Diamond, plans the ruin of a young man, whose name is Clarenceforth. She has a dependent, Miss Ellen Metland, who has so

much humanity as to acquaint the young gentleman with the plot against him. She gives up her patroness, because she cannot receive favour from the unworthy and begs the youth whom she has so obliged to get a coach for her, and send her back to her friends. He is naturally tempted to seduce this guardian, and betray the creature who had saved him; he consequently lodges her safe in a brothel, which poor Kemble, in his zeal for purity, used always to call bordello. Ellen makes her escape, and passes the night under a shed. She at length determines to go back to our Diamond, and implore her to conceal from her friends the rash step she had taken; but these moral people do nothing by halves — she has already told them the story. Despair now sends Miss Metland into the Thames; but the Humane Society are on the alert — their agent, the wise man of the East, recovers the virtuous unfortunate, and is rewarded by finding his own son to have been the seducer. So promising a début in the young man secures for him an irresistible sympathy, and he is thought to be "the most desertless and fit man," as a husband for the young lady. And with a general Ave! Thoanoa! the piece concludes. But the critic has a still better, and the only

proper, conclusion, which Duke Theseus, in the "Midsummer-Night's Dream," has fortunately supplied. "Marry, if he that writ it, had played Clarenceforth, and hung himself in Ellen's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy, and so it is truly and very notably discharged."

Lewis was not a man, in point of moral decorum, to be insulted thus by either Kotzebue or Mistress Inchbald; so in his "East Indian," which I read for Mrs. Jordan, he started a married man of the most exalted sentiments, who, enjoying the hospitality, the confidence, the friendship of a Mr. Mortimer, debauches his daughter. She is, in course, a young lady *comme il y en a peu;* of the purest principles, and doting upon her father. But this husband, Mr. Dorimont, has those gentle arts of persuasion which induce her to leave her parent to unappeasable agony, and accept the situation always vacant, in spite of a wife, — I mean that of his *chere amie.* The interview in the fifth act, between the father and his daughter, is one of the most moving things upon the stage; indeed, it seems to have removed, very opportunely, the wife of the said Dorimont; and as the principle of the young lady had been happily established already, she dressed herself at once in the robes that so

exactly fitted her, and became an honest woman to her heart's content, and that of the fond, abused, and forgiving Mr. Mortimer.

Our friend, Duke Theseus, not having been aware of this additional outrage to his patience, has left no particular instruction for our guidance; but as the disorder seems to be only a variety of the former, the direction as to the treatment cannot in reason be altered for the better.

Miss Biggs now acted Zorayda, instead of Mrs. Jordan, who, as the youthful heroine commonly of these moral times, was hardly ever free from such delicate embarrassments. She confessed freely that "she had a hankering after tender parts; and used to mention her performance of Viola, in 'Twelfth Night,' as a proof that, had her natural pathos when young been refined by an intercourse with the more polished part of society, she might have risen even to eminence in tragedy." I am so afraid of the artificial, that I can only rejoice that she lost the opportunity of being second to anybody, and that both nature and accident confined her to the characters in which she was certainly first by the free display of her own inimitable humour and unaffected sensibility.

The theatre now for some time was without

Mrs. Jordan's assistance, in consequence of her confinement at Bushy, and the birth of a son on the 9th of December.

Managers have often lamented those temporary confinements of great actresses, and, indeed, they disconcert the best conceived arrangements of a season. To do the plays themselves with substitutes is to render them unattractive — to change the plays is perhaps possible, but usually inefficient. There were, fortunately for Kemble, many of Shakespeare's plays which depended entirely upon himself, a sort of monodrama, or the display of single greatness, and some of his best plays, in fact, are of this description. The following suffer but little if the accompanying performers are respectable, provided you have a first-rate actor to sustain what may be called the heroes of them: "Hamlet," "Richard III.," "Merchant of Venice," "Henry V.," "Lear," and "Othello." These were always resources to Kemble, which he could act himself.

His friend, the antiquary, greatly admired that great actor's Richard, probably because, to suit a favourite hypothesis of the critics, Richard was thus again one of the "handsomest men of his time." Kemble invited antiquarian remarks, for

he loved accuracy, and used to say to me, "Well, Mr. Boaden, and the gentleman is right; and when I am really manager of a theatre, the absurdities which he remarks upon shall be corrected." The first blow of the critic fell on Messrs. France and Banting, the royal undertakers of Henry the Sixth, whom they "shut close from every vulgar eye," though in Richard's time they bore the deceased "bare-faced on his bier."

Lady Anne accordingly bends over him, and thus invocates his ghost:

> "Loe, in these windowes, that let forth thy life,
> I powre the helplesse balme of my poore eyes."

Shakespeare's own stage direction would have kept them right:

"*Enter the coarse of Henrie the Sixt, with Halberds to guard it. Lady Anne being the mourner.*" — *1st. Folio*, 1623, p. 174.

Not in mourning, with the modern crapes and the everlasting white pocket-handkerchief. Her quick exclamations to the bearers, upon observing the prodigy attending the approach of the murderer, Richard, are too beautiful and appropriate to be here omitted. I copy them from the same authentic book:

"Oh gentlemen! see! see! dead Henrie's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouthes, and bleed afresh.
Blush, blush, thou lumpe of fowle deformitie,
For 'tis thy presence, that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veines, where no blood dwels."
— *Idem*, p. 175.

The reader remembers that scene, so calculated for the magistracy of the city, where his Grace the Duke of Gloucester is seen standing between two clergymen with a prayer-book in his hand. This book, — for aught I know the "Secret History of the Greenroom," — which Kemble took from the property man before he went on, our exact friend said should have been some "illuminated missal." This was somewhat risible, because one would suppose the heart of the antiquary must have yearned to see the actor skirr away so precious a remain of the dark ages, as if, like Careless, in the "School for Scandal," he would willingly "knock down the mayor and aldermen." But this was a palpable hit at my friend the manager. So was the solitary banner of Richard in the field, "an embroidered white rose." "What!" said the critic, "a King of England seek the invaders of his kingdom and not display his royal banner!" Another palpable hit, egad!

On the subject of armour, the stage has always

been as badly supplied as Don Quixote himself, though the books of the theatre and those of the knight are full of most excellent suits. The audience of "Richard III." are doomed to hear of these steel shells, by which valour was so secured formerly, from the beginning of the play to the end. We have "lock'd up in steel" — "What, is my beaver easier than it was?" — "And all my armour laid into my tent" — "The armourers accomplishing the knights" — "With clink of hammers closing rivets up" — "Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour." Now it is no less strange than true that, excepting the breastplate and thigh pieces on Richmond, not one of the *dramatis personæ* has the smallest particle of armour upon him in either army.

Indeed, as to armour, — real, sound glittering armour, —

> "What, though rare, of later age,
> Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage," —

has been confined to three suits, of either steel or brass, which my gallant friend, Elliston, bespoke, to encourage a man of talent, and these, I believe, he lends to the paraphernalia of the city triumph; and the wearers stand, I hear, as long

as they are able, to support the lord mayor at the high board, to the evident chagrin of Gog and Magog, who on their brackets are seemingly not more than four heads high, and show their legs at least dreadfully foreshortened.

Kean, I think, would be glad to know, that in a *basso-relievo*, pretty near the date of Bosworth Field, Richard has just received the last blow from Richmond, and is fallen to the earth; in this position, he grasps the crown he wore upon his helmet, convulsively, with both hands, as even in death desirous to keep it from the usurper.

This sculpture, reasonably good, was, and perhaps still is, over the chimneypiece, in the library of Gosfield Hall, Essex, the seat of the Duke of Buckingham.

It is time to return to the modern drama. Maria Geisweiler had made for Sheridan the translation of "Pizarro," and after his improvements, in the English taste, favoured the Germans by rendering the same into their language. She therefore next, by corresponding with Kotzebue, was favoured with his manuscript of "Joanna de Montfaucon," and translated that into English also, expecting a similar result as to "Joanna." Sheridan, however, having possessed himself of

the "Mines of Peru," was not inclined to court any additional toil, and "Joanna" fell to the lot of Cumberland; but whether Kotzebue was pleased or displeased with the liberties taken by Sheridan with "Pizarro," he was not indifferent as to his fame in England, and finding that Cumberland had merely taken his fable and even debased some of his characters, he hastened to disavow the trash grafted upon his stock, by a public address in the newspapers signed with his name. The friends of Cumberland held this to be unnecessary, because he had himself published his avowal that "he was responsible for every sentence in the drama, with the exception of a very few unimportant periods."

But surely Kotzebue was justified in the course he took — a printed avowal of authorship reaches only those who read the play. Common fame states that a play written by Kotzebue was but indifferently received on the London stage. His fame is affected by it — the charm seems to be dispelled — a suspicion is excited, at least among the English, that his success before was derived from his adapters, and that Cumberland having less tact than Sheridan, the German failed of course. Fortunately for Kotzebue in the case

of "Joanna," he was told by our critics what was disliked in Cumberland's perversion, rather than version of his play, and therefore, to all the points of objection, fairly answered that he had never written such stuff, nor drawn such characters. The German author is usually irritable.

Cumberland's "Joanna" had some music by Mr. Busby, and, highly decorated, was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 16th of January, 1800. Mr. Harris might expect something from the union of Kotzebue and Cumberland, but the piece lingered on to its eleventh repetition, when, on the 8th of February, Morton, with one of his unexpensive comedies, "Speed the Plough," rendered the manager safe for the rest of the season. It was acted forty times the first run of it, in the short space of four months.

Mrs. Jordan was now returned to her long list of attractions at Drury Lane, and among the novelties afforded her was a comedy by Mr. Prince Hoare, acted the 10th of May, which seemed to be written as a counterpart to the "East Indian;" it was called "Indiscretion," and exposed, roundly enough, the folly of leaving the paternal roof, and accepting the protection of some man of honour, who cannot submit to be

bound by the laws. The very devil possessed the stage of Europe just now; not a single mortal could write but upon the subject of seduction — a hateful, treacherous, and unmanly vice. Hoare's "Indiscretion" was better treated by the theatre than his farce, called the "Children, or Give Them Their Way," in which, also, Jordan acted for the general favourite, Bannister's, benefit. The performers of this splendid theatre scarcely knew a word of it, and to give them their way was, in truth, perdition to the "Children." But we now approach very serious matter indeed.

On the 15th of May, 1800, there was a field-day of the grenadier battalion of guards in Hyde Park, and that fine body of men was reviewed by his Majesty. During the evolutions, a ball cartridge, by accident, was fired from the ranks, and a Mr. Ongly was wounded. No aim, certainly, could here have been taken at the king, for his Majesty was on horseback, and about eight yards distant, on the same line with the gentleman shot. Had that gentleman been the same distance from the king, behind his Majesty, an evil intention might have been inferred and plausibly maintained. It, notwithstanding, challenged particular remark on account of what we are next to state.

Mrs. Jordan's Hypolita was, certainly, one of the most diverting exhibitions on the stage; and their Majesties, with the Princesses Augusta, Elizabeth, Mary, and Amelia went on this memorable day to Drury Lane Theatre to enjoy a hearty laugh at the bustle of "She Would and She Would Not," and the "Humourist," a farce by Cobb, in which the Dabble of Bannister was supposed a caricature of Patence, the dentist. The farce had the honour of being recommended by Edmund Burke to Sheridan, in the year 1785.

His Majesty had just entered his box, and was bowing to the usual applause from the audience, when a man started up from the second row of the pit, about the middle of the bench, and suddenly levelling a horse-pistol at the royal box, fired it. The house was, for a few moments, panic-struck; the neighbours of the man in the pit seized him, and he was passed by persons in the orchestra across the palisades, and thence into the music-room of the theatre. He had dropped the pistol under his seat.

Nothing could surpass the fortitude of his Majesty. Seeing the queen about to enter the box, the king waved his hand to her, that she might for a time keep back. But to remove all apprehen-

sion among the people, his Majesty advanced to the front of the box, and laying his right hand upon his breast, bowed, with much grace, his acknowledgments for the interest expressed by his people. Hadfield, the maniac, being secured, and the house only noisy from its excessive joy and gratulation, the queen advanced in much alarm, and his Majesty, to compose her mind, said, "Only a squib; they have been firing squibs." But the queen knew more, it seemed, for, after making her curtsey, she asked his Majesty "whether they should stay?" "Certainly," replied the king, "the whole of the entertainments." The curtain now rose, and "God Save the King" was given by the whole house, and repeated with shouts of approbation.

The play began, but the stage was interrupted by the popular anxiety. Bannister was asked a number of questions. To be sure that the assassin was in custody, it was demanded that he should be brought upon the stage. Mrs. Jordan, now coming on, immediately addressed them, and assured the house, "that he was perfectly secured, and properly attended." They listened to the voice of the charmer, and ordered the play to proceed. The princesses, with the exception of

Elizabeth, fainted with apprehension, but were at length brought to tolerable composure; it was evident, however, that a deep impression had been made on their minds. The party, notwithstanding, "right royally" sat out the whole of the entertainments, and as far as enthusiasm of one kind can console people for that of another, the party were consoled; but, as if this day had been picked out of the calendar to give every description of annoyance to the feelings of majesty, a wretched rascal of a shoemaker planted himself at the corner of Southampton Street, expressly for the purpose of hissing and hooting the king, which he did in the most impudent and audacious manner, even following the carriage a considerable way, and raving every vulgar note of contempt and execration, which we had caught from the obscene harpies of Paris. He was at length taken into custody.

We have seldom an opportunity of following royal personages from a scene of public appearance into their private apartments. On the present occasion we have it on record how the King of England conducted himself on the arrival of the family at the queen's house. Supper, as usual, was immediately put upon the table, but none of

the royal family sat down. Her Majesty drank a little wine and water, and then retired. The Princess Amelia, who had been ill near two years, fainted on entering her chamber, and the fits continued so violent that her restoration to life seemed doubtful. His Majesty, on hearing her situation, went to her chamber, and attended his afflicted daughter until recollection returned, when she threw herself into his arms, and said "she would be comforted." On leaving Amelia's chamber, his Majesty visited also the Princesses Augusta, Elizabeth, and Mary, who had suppressed their feelings until they could retire; and now a flood of tears brought them relief, which adorns while it soothes; but the night passed away in comfortless dejection. The Princess Sophia, who had been for some time indisposed, upon hearing what sounded like confusion in the palace, called to her attendants to inquire the cause. She was told that Princess Amelia had returned from the theatre unwell; but her considerate parent, knowing the comfort that his voice conveyed to his children, as he passed her door said, in a satisfied tone, "Sophia, good night," and then retired to rest himself, about one o'clock.

On the following morning, Friday, the 16th,

their Royal Highnesses, the Prince of Wales, Dukes of York, Clarence, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Prince William, breakfasted with their Majesties and the princesses, who were in tolerable health, though dreadfully depressed in spirits. Their Royal Highnesses had been present at the examination of Hadfield, by Sheridan, and there existed not the smallest doubt of the man's having served with distinguished bravery under the Duke of York's command, that he had received sabre cuts in the head sufficient to destroy any reason in the world, and had been left for dead some hours in a ditch, before he was captured by the French. Sir William Addington, then entering the music-room, examined the witnesses himself, and pointed out the difference that would be made in the case, if the pistol had not been levelled at his Majesty. Hadfield assured him that the act had no malice against the sovereign in it, but arose out of weariness of existence, and a determination to be rid of it by the hands of justice.

On the 26th of the following month, James Hadfield was very properly tried for high treason. It was a trial at bar, before Lord Kenyon, in the court of King's Bench, and Mr. Erskine was assigned him for counsel. If ever there was a time

when the lower orders were systematically corrupted, this was that time, and, therefore, every pains had been taken to ascertain whether the prisoner had been at all politically connected, because the insane, touched with political enthusiasm, not only can commit the treasonable act of murdering the sovereign, but may do it without suffering the extreme penalty of the law. The king, himself, I well know, at first inclined to the notion of conspiracy, because he used the following expressions when speaking of the attempt: "If, with my family, I cannot enjoy a play in the midst of my people, let them take my life, for existence is not worth having upon such conditions."

But on Mr. Erskine's calling his witnesses, such a stream of clear, unquestionable evidence flowed direct to Hadfield's insanity, that Mr. Attorney-General seemed surprised he had been so imperfectly instructed, and, by Lord Kenyon's direction and Mr. Attorney's concurrence, the jury, without withdrawing, recorded a verdict of not guilty. Hadfield was properly taken care of for life. But the "flattering unction" that was drawn by some slight observers of these times, and laid to their hearts, "that nothing short of lunacy could attack a monarch so beloved as George the Third," was

extremely well calculated for the rabblement of addresses, the gala costume of would-be knights, but utterly unsafe to build upon. Let us attend a little to the private correspondence, at an earlier period of the same reign, passing between the unknown Junius and John Wilkes. And first for the "Alderman." "I have had the shivering fits of a slow, lurking fever (a strange disorder for Wilkes), which makes writing painful to me. I could plunge the patriot dagger in the heart of the tyrant of my country, but my hand would now tremble in doing it."

Now let us hear the great unknown, who greets his love, —

"Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous."

"Continue careful of your health. Your head is too useful to be spared, and your hand may be wanted." He then goes on to show the real object he would have attacked: "It is not Bute, nor even the princess dowager. It is (what the printer dares not publish), whom every honest man should detest, and every brave man should attack."

In the partisans of such men, less cautious, and more enthusiastic, the king alluded to was likely to find most duteous subjects! they spoke treason

only in metaphor; their hearts and heads and hands were devoted to his service! Oh, most certainly!

But enough upon such a subject. The performers of Drury Lane Theatre, and Mrs. Jordan particularly, thought it hard that they should so seldom have the honour of acting before the sovereign, on account of Sheridan's opposition to his government; and they had, therefore, hopes from some late speeches of his in the Commons' House, and a few recent effusions by Rolla in their own, that his Majesty might allow them fair play in his sight, and repeat his visits, if he found himself entertained. The princesses were naturally anxious to see Mrs. Jordan in particular, who had appeared to justify a permanent attachment in one so dear to them, and to retain his respect, as well as his affection. Everything seemed to be working in their favour, when this miserable event was likely to revive a distaste for their theatre that had been sweetened away by the eloquent Peruvian.

Mr. Harris, of Covent Garden Theatre, as a man of business, was superior to most. Highly distinguished by the court, he was particularly attentive to the feelings of his royal patrons; and,

perhaps, for mere amusement, the passing laugh of light matter, and temporary satire, the novelties there, and the performers alike, were the most welcome to them. We think Lewis, Quick, Munden, Fawcett, Emery, and Blanchard soon, with Mattocks and Davenport, "confident against the world," in humour. Quick certainly possessed a peculiar tact in exciting the royal laugh; and the good-humoured monarch noticed him off the stage, with that condescension which his Majesty never bestowed upon persons of doubtful or indecorous character.

The Haymarket Theatre this season abounded in novelty. There was "Obi, or Three-finger'd Jack," the "Point of Honour," and the "Review, or the Wags of Windsor," all abundantly successful. Among the waggeries of the latter was one of the author, who, on this occasion, chose to distinguish himself harmoniously to the tune of Arthur Griffenhoofe, Jr., which, perhaps, excited a laugh from those who were in the secret. As to the "Review" itself, it raised unbounded laughter in the hands of Suett, Johnstone, Emery, and Fawcett; and this was all it professed to do. We had at this time two actors upon the stage who might be said to suggest character to their wri-

ters. Emery, though not literally born in Yorkshire, was bred there; few men were so highly accomplished as this comedian: he was an excellent musician, and played the violin at twelve years of age in the orchestra; he was a fine draughtsman, and painted in oil with the skill of an artist. Perhaps no man was ever so completely successful as Emery in the Yorkshire character; it appeared, through life, to have been, "meat and drink to him to see a clown." He was so perfect a representative of the loutish cunning of the three ridings, that it was difficult to believe that he had, or could have any personal or mental qualities, to discriminate the man from the actor. To say truth, he delighted to exhibit the "knowing lad," and he had a fund of stories, which he told in the greenroom of the theatre, and at table where he dined, some of which have, assuredly, never been equalled for exactness. There are many who speak a Yorkshire dialect as they do Scotch, but with little accuracy; and the jargon printed in play-books as the language of the North, is oftener the language of Babel, when languages were confounded. But Emery's ear was too perfect to mistake, and the pleasure he took in the exhibition too great for negligence; he was

perfect to an aspirate, or the want of one. It was from Emery that I first heard "scho," for the feminine pronoun she, preserved to us copiously, as the true dialect of the North, by Gawin Douglas, in his invaluable translation of Virgil. Thus he says of Juno:

> "Scho did behald amid the feildis plane."
> —B. xii. p. 411.

To show how the lowland Scotch poetry illustrates the pronunciation of the illiterate peasant in our northern counties.

The other actor was John Johnstone, in whom the Irish character was certainly somewhat refined, but who taught our dramatists quite enough for their use, namely, all that was pleasant. Rock and others rendered it vulgar, whereas Johnstone made it sparkle with humour, and in either blunder or mischance, anger or jest, uniformly delightful. Alas! to how many great artists am I obliged to add the farewell of regret to the just estimate of their merits!

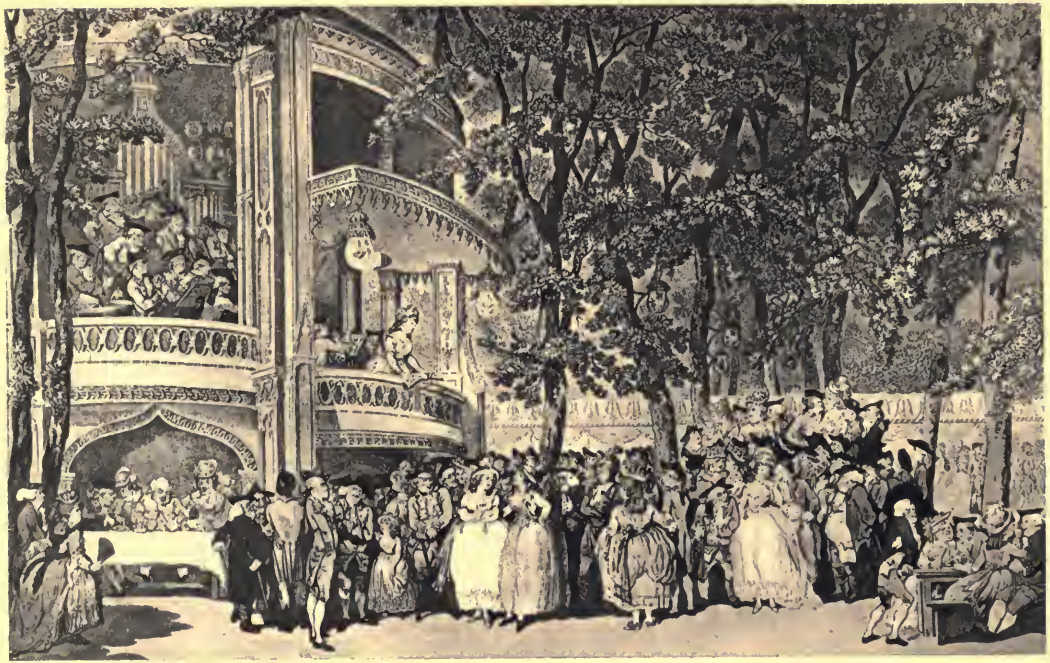
CHAPTER III.

Season of 1800–01 — Kemble Opened with His Hamlet — Probable Result of His Purchasing — The "Indian" — Doctor Houlton's Prologue — Innocent Operas — Vauxhall Hooke — The Plowdens — "Virginia," An Opera — Kemble Ready to Withdraw It — "Bold Stroke for a Wife," the Stop-gap — "Antonio," Another Sacrifice — The Procession of Tragedies — Mrs. Siddons — Shakespeare Revivals — Hopes of the Renters — Want of Colours and Canvas in the Painting-room — Aversion to Modern Plays — Even Colman Not Engaged to Write Comedy — Apparent Jealousy — Mrs. Jordan, Even Cumberland Short of Her Powers — The Modern Writers Ignorant of Female Character — Cumberland and Burgoyne — The Latter Would Have Written for Jordan — Jealousy of Kemble — Cooke invited to Covent Garden — Sketch of That Strange Being — Made a Rival to Kemble in Richard — Permitted a Year's Triumph — Kemble and Cooke as Macbeth — Cooke's True Power — His Dislike of Kemble — The Country Girl Returns to the Stage in March.

THE season of 1800–01 commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 16th of September, 1800, under the management of Mr. Kemble, and he played his Hamlet on the first night. The notion that he would purchase a fourth of the property was again current,

Vauxhall Gardens

From a cotemporary print in colours



and he spoke of his management no longer as that of a deputy, but as one having authority, such as the property only can bestow. The sum he was to give was agreed upon; all that remained was to satisfy his legal friend that the title was a good one. In the theatre itself, any prospect of a change was desirable. Peake, the treasurer, was as kind a man as ever secured a chest; but it was often empty. The performers had running accounts instead of weekly payments, and his desk was crowded with billets importing the absolute necessity of relief, or the actors would no longer play, which in that profession alone means they would no longer work.

But the Kemble and the Siddons, it was well known, were always superior to irregularity. A debt was a horror to them. The very connection of such people with the house secured its punctuality; and the common desire and the common belief of the company ran closely in the language of Shakespeare:

"That by the help of these (with Him above
To ratify the work), we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Do faithful homage, and receive free honours;—
All which we pine for now."

—*Macbeth*, fol. 1623, p. 143.

At the commencement, Mrs. Siddons was observed to play with singular firmness and effect. Jordan was effective at least for a month or two. When the usual cause might be expected to produce the usual defect, her nearly annual confinement, Kemble had some old engagements to dispose of; I mean pieces accepted, which he would himself have refused. The first of these was a farce called the "Indian," owned at least by a Mr. John Fenwick. It was the French "Arlequin Sauvage," and Charles Kemble acted it. It was an American review of European manners. A weak man, with an Ednburgh degree in physic, who wrote for a morning paper, called Doctor Houlton, contributed a prologue to introduce the savage ignoramus, or critic, which contained the following clear nonsense, spoken by Bob Palmer:

> "Quick on the infant's brain perception's ray
> Broke from the orb of scientific day;
> With gradual force impress'd the lucid beam,
> Till age improv'd it to a light supreme."

Now a ray may be perceived, but perception has no ray; and if from scientific day the ray breaks quickly, its force cannot be gradual. Age will never improve science like this. When such

stuff as the present was shown to Kemble, he used to say: "Ay, it may be all very right, but I don't understand it." The licenser alone saw something in it, — a fee of two guineas, which should be abolished at once. Though it has been done in substance, for we have banished the prologue itself from the modern stage.

The doctor was an admirer of Bickerstaff's innocent operas, and persuaded himself that the good old style might be revived; this he tried in an entertainment called "Wilmore Castle," but he had omitted every sort of interest except what the Marrowfats might produce at a wedding dinner, and they were acted by Bob Palmer and Miss Tidswell. The Vauxhall Hooke composed the music of this opera. He was an excellent musician, but he wrote too fast, and his fabric was too slight for the most part. Yet his subjects were familiar and popular. He had been accustomed to compose for Vernon and Wrighten, and in the open air he had no fellow.

In some way or other the Plowdens had got into a certain theatrical notoriety; they were a weighty but good-looking couple, and rather adorned a private box. Mrs. Plowden absolutely

undertook, not only to write, but to compose a full opera called "Virginia;" I went to see it, knowing decidedly the fate that awaited it. Kemble was called on at the close, and made one of those speeches which we used to consider as revealing more than met the ear, namely, that the piece had been obtruded on him. He totally forgot the proprietors of the theatre, and spoke only of himself and the author.

"The respect, ladies and gentlemen, that I have always shown to your opinion, whenever I have had the honour of conducting the public amusements of this theatre, leads me to regret that it should be adverse to this piece. I must naturally feel interested in the success of every dramatic work that is presented at this theatre; but at the same time, I most sensibly feel the deference which is due to your decision. In this sentiment the author of the piece presented to-night joins with me, and authorises me to say that 'it is withdrawn.' Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, we shall have the honour of acting here, to-morrow night, the 'Bold Stroke for a Wife.'"

This was the constant stop-gap for all failures; the substitute for all the d——d among the plays, and all the feverish among the players:

"This jug was to the ringers carried,
Whoever either died or married."

The "Bold Stroke for a Wife" was a sort of animal magnetism, which could never fail to attract about half the nightly expenses into the theatre. The repetition of this succedaneum used to excite many a laugh among the initiated, who knew that Kemble, unless busied upon Shakespeare, was really idle as to management. During the whole year 1800 he had no new comedy, and the only tragedy was one called "Antonio," from which nothing was expected, which was acted but a single night, and in the representation of which the author had the mortification to see that he was sacrificed. This was withdrawn after a single trial, which the audience seemed to consider sufficient for one offence. Mr. Godwin was by no means turned to tragedy; he was either weak in his fable, or impure in his interest, careless about received opinions, and not so much a master of the passions as to move them in spite of all the indecorum in the world. He was not a Kotzebue. "Antonio" thus removed, of which I sincerely believe Mr. Kemble not to have been sorry, "for in his way it stood," he resumed the task of getting up Shakespeare with new scenes and decorations.

Modern tragedy, though it might contrast fully enough, God knows, with Shakespeare, it was absurd to think on as any relief to a sombre management like the present; for Mrs. Siddons there were to be doled out incessantly Isabella, Mrs. Beverley, Euphrasia, Shore, Lady Randolph, Mary Queen of Scots. She was also in the "Stranger" and "Pizarro," as Mrs. Haller and Elvira. Then came the long list of Shakespeare, in which she was also employed in the greater part, and the remaining plays of a single character, of which I have already spoken, for Mr. Kemble himself. All, all excellent, thrice excellent; but they had now been seen for fifteen years together, and the greatest ingenuity could neither make nor find a single new point once a year. We have not so many different audiences as is commonly imagined. A revival such as "John," "Cymbeline," or "Lear," brought, for a few nights, some money to the house, and more curiosity — I mean that the long tribe of renters swelled the audience to see the attraction, and judge whether they were likely by it to obtain any of their growing arrears. These novelties, too, cost money: they must have, on the critical principle, new and accurate scenes, and also new and very rich and expensive dresses.

Hear on this subject Mr. Kemble himself writing to the treasurer, and we shall have a perfect knowledge of the actual state of the concern: "They are standing still in Greenwood's room for want of a little canvas." "We are all at a stand for want of colours." "If you will help us you shall have 'Cymbeline' and full houses, otherwise we must go on with the 'West Indian,'" etc. There was no thought, we see, of such a comedy as the "Will," for instance, which might bring twenty £500 houses, and cost them mere coats and waistcoats. And here, as to profitable management, there was compound error. Kemble cared little for any comedy, and for modern comedy not at all. Sheridan was satisfied if he saw the "Rivals" and the "School for Scandal" sparkling among the gloom of "dark December." Colman could have written "John Bull" as well for Drury Lane as he did for Covent Garden subsequently. He was much more turned to comedy than to tragedy — they had employed him for "Bluebeard" and "Feudal Times." But for a comedy that was to take its rank with one of the modern Congreve, that never occurred to the cabinet of this political and bankrupt theatre. Cumberland was a sentimentalist in his late efforts, and when he

wrote for Mrs. Jordan, herself, he forgot her greatest power, and remembered only her delivery of Viola in "Twelfth Night." She was usually betrayed and deserted; Wycherley, and Congreve, and Cibber had conceived something perfectly in nature, which she appropriated to herself. The moderns were little acquainted with unsophisticated minds, and drove rather at incessant business and pungent interest than the display of genuine character of whatever age. Besides this their female parts were comparatively unimportant — the writers appeared to have lived, all of them, in chambers, and studied nothing female above their bed-makers. They knew nothing that constituted the true feminine feelings. They guessed only at the mental distinction that for ever exists between man and his helpmate — their young women had no character at all, and their old uniformly a bad one. Cumberland could write a flattery of the sex, but flattery is not likeness. General Burgoyne could do something more; but he was exhausted in a single field, and left nothing but his "Heiress" behind him to speak for the truly comic power that was in him. He could have written for Mrs. Jordan had he lived.

Although Mr. Harris properly estimated the

management of his rival, and certainly had every wish to confirm him in his course, he still did not like that it should be said of Covent Garden, "If you want to see tragedy you must go to the other house." An old prejudice among the people of middle life had settled the expectation of a tragedy on Monday nights, and he had done what he could to comply with this wish, as far as "Romeo and Juliet" and "Hamlet" would go; but he had no first-rate actor, since the loss of Henderson — nothing that wore the cast of thought, or could stand a competition with that critical skill in Kemble, which, though long sneered at as pedantry, was at last admitted to contain very different power, and to be as much distinguished for intense pathos, manly grace, and heroic ardour, as it had ever been for the dry proprieties of the genuine text of his author, or the new versions he had given of either his meaning or his action. Indeed, by some very recent displays, he had removed the disparity which some had discovered between his sister and himself, and in the novelties from the German stage in particular, among which I place Penruddock, with the Stranger and Rolla, he had to the picturesque joined an art of delivery so consummate, that it was frequently

said, though nature in some respects had been kinder to his sister, yet that he was, without a doubt, the greater artist.

In this state of things some favourable reports were received from Dublin of an actor exceedingly eccentric, but certainly a master in his art, who had an ambition to try his strength expressly against this very man, and to dispute the crown with him in Bosworth Field itself. His first appearance was on the 31st of October, 1800, and he fully answered the expectation he had excited. George Frederick Cooke was the son of an officer, and born in the barracks of Dublin about the year 1756, so that he came into the world about the same time as the gentleman whom he selected for a rival. He had been educated in the north of England, and by a custom among the scholars, "more honoured in the breach than the observance," had indulged himself in several private plays, and been applauded for his performance. To act became a passion with him. It is recorded that the first play he ever read was "Venice Preserved," which, at whatever distance, I shall term the most effective tragedy we have, after the "Othello" of our inimitable Shakespeare. When he left school he went, or was sent

to sea, and seemed condemned to commerce for life. A legacy, when he was of age, however, made him master of his time for a season — during which he did nothing. With the improvidence of a sailor, he would not endure the labour that he loved, while he could enjoy himself in idleness; and he made his appearance on the stage about the time when he found it difficult to make it any where else. This was about the year 1778, at the Haymarket Theatre. He then for eight years together cultivated his talent in the provincial theatres, when a second legacy, by removing his necessity, rendered him capricious, and he played at Nottingham and Lincoln, at Manchester and Liverpool. He then went the York circuit with Wilkinson. Then, with extraordinary attachment, continued for years in the Newcastle company. In 1791 he was again at Manchester, and was invited to Dublin in 1794, by Daly, and in 1797 to the same place, under the management of Jones, passing the interval between them at Manchester, where he was in high favour. He was now standing successful upon the stage of Covent Garden, as King Richard the Third, and naturally put the following question to his new friend the manager:

"But shall we wear these glories for a day,
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?"

Mr. Harris, with great sincerity, could make the desired response:

"Still live they, and for ever let them last!"

He had got a most difficult, but still a valuable subject to manage, and fortunately he could draw criticism into the field, to talk at random about the rival Richards, and moot points eternally of little intrinsic value, and giving or withholding, by a party-estimate, without the slightest care to verify what was actually said or done by the combatants.

Kemble acted Richard on the Monday preceding Cooke's appearance, and then wisely withdrew himself from all contest about it — what he did, or did not do, in the part, he afforded the disputants no means of verifying that season; for, from the beginning of November to the end of the following June, the Richard of Drury Lane left his antagonist in possession, against whose power of lungs, at least, he could make but a very weak and insufficient appeal. What Kemble said upon the occasion was, "that the intrepid Yorkist was certainly a gentleman, and that it

could only be by the most enchanting powers of persuasion that he was able to mould every creature of either sex to his purpose; and, accordingly, if you observed, Shakespeare had finished all his speeches with the greatest care."

The truth, however, was that Kemble's Richard was greatly below his Macbeth, whose nerve at least was inferior to that of Richard. Cooke in Macbeth is a contemptible assassin; the hero had been sullied, and he had no art to raise him. Kemble's imagination here kept him aloof from all vulgar or merely forcible competition. He placed, as his motto, steadily before him the passage:

> "The spirits that know
> All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus —
> Fear not, Macbeth, no man that's born of woman
> Shall e'er have power upon thee."

Kemble saw in the weird sisters the destinies of the North — Cooke, three Scotch witches upon broomsticks; I mean as to their knowledge or their power. Kean, a much greater actor than Cooke, fell below probably his own expectation in Macbeth — in the natural he was little accustomed to fail; it was in the supernatural demands of the character that he sunk under the burthen, where

mere physical force and very admirable invention, too, were yet insufficient to maintain him. Upon the pinnacle of that temple the head became uncertain and the body weak.[1]

To close, however, with Mr. Cooke. To Covent Garden he was an accession of great value — he was a Shylock, an Iago, a Kitely, a Sir Archy, and a Sir Pertinax. He was formed for the sarcastic, like Macklin ; his features and his utterance were only harmonious in discord. He was an admirable Sir Giles Overreach, a character in which Massinger is very close indeed to the power of Shakespeare. I forget whether he played Luke in that author's "City Madam," but the hard, insolent irony of that masterpiece would have sat upon him without a sign of effort. Our drama does not afford many specimens of the kind I mean. It was not sturdy or unceremonious virtue that Cooke excelled in ; the sarcasm must be malignant to suit him perfectly. He was an Apemantus, not a Kent. I remember a trait of him in private life which shows the distinction I have pointed out in Cooke himself.

[1] "There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright,
Will ask thee skill."
— *Paradise Regained*, b. iv. v. 448.

When Kemble, whom his polite adversary had designated through life by the appellation of Black Jack, had bought into the property of Covent Garden Theatre, among other discordant things about that concern he found George Cooke, and studiously tried to propitiate his sturdy rival. He gave him a dinner, I remember, in Great Russel Street. Cooke came in good time, well dressed, and in the library we chatted very agreeably till dinner was served — he appeared to me to have read with care, and to speak with the politeness of a gentleman. When we were seated at table he had a chair opposite to mine, and I was attentive to him, with the expectation that the moderation he showed would pass away with the hours, and that, as we warmed with wine, I should see something of the character which the world attributed to him. We had some mimicry that evening, and the mime made him, among others, act Harlequin. He appeared very much entertained. Munden got up a sham quarrel, and very hard words, and something beyond words, flew about. Cooke was still unmoved — he seemed to wait upon Kemble, and to say, like Macduff, when he longed for the combat, but with the tyrant only:

> " Either thou, Macbeth,
> Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
> I sheathe again undeeded."
>
> — *Fol.* 1623, p. 150.

Whether Kemble had kept a guard upon himself expressly I can only conjecture, but they agreed like brothers. It was "Mr. Kemble" and "my dear George," and one nosegay seemed to perfume them both. There is a time when men, who are modest in general, become the heroes of their own tale, and this at length happened to King John; "for wine," says Johnson, "exerts its natural power upon kings." He told the story of his progress as an actor, and, among other accompaniments, mentioned the little aid that he had derived from the newspapers. This seemed to startle the company, who had not quite forgotten the even fulsome jargon in his praise, by which more than one critic had poisoned the peace of the profession. Cooke's eye quickened, but he did not speak. At length something like difference of opinion was manifested as to the fact, and a few stubborn particulars were gone into, which it seemed difficult to controvert. A very slight pause intervened, when Cooke, summoning up a look of the most sarcastic bitterness, fixed his

eyes upon Kemble, and pronounced aloud the following lines from the great painter of man:

> "O 'tis a common proof,
> That lowliness is young Ambition's ladder,
> Whereto the climber upward turns his face:
> But when he once attains the topmost round,
> He then unto the ladder turns his back,
> Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend."
>
> —*Julius Cæsar*, 1623, p. 114.

Such a quotation operated like an extinguisher upon poor human vanity, and the subject was dropped. The monitor, I believe, soon after called for brandy, surely without necessity, and school broke up without further mischief. Such was his mood occasionally while on this side excess; on the other he became so utterly and mischievously ungovernable as even to threaten his audiences, and, patting his sword with his right hand, "wish himself among them."

In a work that looks to the passing ornaments of the drama, I must not omit to notice the death of Mrs. Montagu, which occurred on the 25th of August, 1800, at her house in Portman Square, nor forget the expressive look of Kemble soon after at the hatchment in front of the beautiful

building, nor his happy application of Antony's exclamation when he learns the death of Fulvia:

"There's a great spirit gone!"

Who can forget her "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare?" or the smart reproof to Voltaire? or the general ignorance of that poet and his works that distinguished his countrymen? A ludicrous instance occurs to me. Guernier had been employed to make designs for Pope's small edition in twelves; now, to do this some reading of his works seems to be necessary. Accordingly this artist condescended to read our barbarian, and he selected in "Macbeth" the following stage direction for the subject of his illustration.

"*Eight Kings appear and pass over in order — the last with a glass in his hand.*"

And accordingly he read, or might have read, in the play, at eight lines distance from the stage direction:

"I'll see no more —
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,
Which shows me many more."

The eighth phantom in Guernier's design abso-

lutely holds a common wine-glass in his hand. Nor are some of Voltaire's own blunders much less risible.

The great woman above apostrophised was some years since at Spa, with her friend Mrs. Carter, and the late Earl of Bath, after making the tour of Germany. At Liege, the whole college of Jesuits came out to meet our two learned countrywomen; and, after an interview, confessed that fame had not exaggerated their mental powers, for they had more learning than their whole college. At Louvain, the vice-chancellor addressed Mrs. Carter in a prepared Greek oration, and she, without the slightest hesitation, replied to him in the same language. Here were two Elizabeths to add to the great queen. To talk of the equality of human conditions indeed! Mrs. Montagu had been educated by Conyers Middleton, and was almost worshipped by the good Lord Lyttelton. She had been happily married to the grandson of an earl, who left her, at his decease, in most affluent circumstances; and, when she died herself, she could devise estates to her nephew valued at £10,000 per annum. And in addition to all this, her memory will be revered alike for her genius and her benevolence. With Gibbon, she

might gratefully say, "she had drawn a rich prize in the lottery of life."

To return within the walls of the theatre. The genius of Drury Lane being fast asleep while awaiting a change in the property, we must look at its restless rival, which had got out another five-act comedy, by Reynolds, called "Life," attended with his usual success; that is, about twenty £500 houses. The Marchmont interest is certainly improbable: the man does not know his own wife when he sees her, and she is employed as a governess to teach her own daughter. The Lackbrains excite hearty laughter, and Sir Harry Torpid perfect astonishment, being represented by William Lewis.

Tom Dibdin, another clever and stirring spirit, worked up "Il Bondocani" out of the new Arabian Tales, and diverted the town with the immortal Haroun Alraschid.

The month of August, 1800, saw Mr. Holcroft united to the very amiable daughter of M. Mercier, the author of a periodical called *Tableau de Paris*. And this union undoubtedly facilitated his access to the novelties of the French stage. This enabled him to be beforehand with others in the preparation of M. Bouilly's "Abbé de l' Epée," called by the

translator "Deaf and Dumb;" which, although not produced on the stage till the 24th of February, 1801, had been long in the manager's possession, who had been teasing Peake for many months to let him have fifty pounds for the author, whose slight go-cart could not wait for the wheels of the ponderous wagon of Drury. At the end of November Kemble had not been able to get it for him, though faithfully promised a fortnight before.

On the 18th of January Mrs. Jordan was delivered of a daughter, at Bushy, and her confinement seems to have quickened the deaf and dumb of the cabinet council, and the play was therefore produced to the public with vast applause on the day already named. Kemble himself acted the benevolent Abbé.

Horne Tooke calls abbreviations in language the wings of Mercury, by which an effort at least is made to keep up with the demands of thought. Kemble seemed to telegraph his interesting scholar Miss Decamp, who acted the part of Julio; the set of signs between them were something in the taste of Prospero's wand, and she was at least as observant, as obedient, and quite as spiritual as Ariel himself. I think my accomplished friend and

heroine carried in Julio the art of pantomime farther than I have ever seen it extend: there was a pathos in the helpless condition of the character which adhered to it, act it who might, but she had an eager joy and nod of assent when comprehended that seemed to spring from her own nature; it took away the weariness from continued silence, and startled while it satisfied. Wroughton, in Darlemont, was extremely good indeed. Kemble must at least have equalled Monvel, who performed the Abbé at Paris.

In my "Life of Mr. Kemble," I have spoken fully of his revivals of "King John" and "Cymbeline;" they were good, permanent valuables in a house, but they cost money, and there was a pantomime to be brought out at Christmas, which was called "Harlequin Amulet," the grand feature of which was a dragon and certain rattlesnakes, of which Johnston, the machinist, was the maker: the latter flew about the stage in a rather alarming manner, and sometimes stuck in the grooves; on such occasions it was the spectators who hissed.

The Country Girl came again "to the play," on the 12th of March. It is true that she was as delightful as ever in the part, but she often com-

plained that, if her friends were not tired of the repetition, she was almost ashamed of it. Colman might have written for her, but the money for the "Poor Gentleman" could only be got from Mr. Harris.

CHAPTER IV.

Decided Hostilities of 1801–02 — Kemble Now Challenges Comparison — No Coals from Newcastle — Lewis's Apology — The Faculty Bulletins — Cooke's Marriage Annulled — Next Month He Really Arrives, and Triumphs — Prevalence of Drunkenness — Mrs. Billington Sings for Both Houses — Siddons, Henry, and His "Integrity" — As an Actor — Marries Miss Murray — Isabella's Own Son — Mrs. Billington's Accident — Quick, the Cunning Isaac, at Drury — Difficult Music — Nasolini — Kemble's Zanga, and Fifth Henry — Reynolds at the Other House — Nothing Written for Mrs. Jordan — Poaching at Strawberry Hill — The "Fashionable Friends" — Seduction and Sentiment — Lady Selina, Miss Decamp — Sketch of That Character — Cobbett would Not Illuminate on the Peace — Applies for a Guard — Answer of the Minister — M. Otto's House and Mr. Bull's Mistake — Concord Declared an Insult by Acclamation — M. Otto Found the Schoolmaster Not Abroad — Amity *versus* Concord, Adopted — Mrs. Jordan in Lady Teazle— Mrs. Jordan at Richmond and Margate — Season 1802–03 — Mrs. Jordan's Painter, Romney.

THE winter campaign of 1801–02 opened with decided hostility. Whatever induced Mr. Kemble to leave his rival the first season in possession of Bosworth Field, it looked like fear of him to discontinue the performance of Richard entirely, a compliment that old Sheridan did not pay even to Garrick, for he

alternated the great characters of Shakespeare with him even on the same stage. Kemble on the very first night of the season, —

> "Like Bellona's bridegroom, lapt in proof,
> Confronted him with self-comparisons."

This was on the Saturday, the 12th of September, and the day of rest, which suspends all combat except the revolutionary, only intervened, when Cooke, nothing loath, as it was supposed, was to answer the challenge at Covent Garden. The play was put up accordingly, and the hero expected on Monday in time to dress for the part, but he was so indifferent and daring, that the *Newcastle Chronicle* of the 12th absolutely announced his benefit there on the 14th, when he was to play Stukeley in the "Gamester," though he could not but know the arrangement at Covent Garden. The play of "Lovers' Vows," or the return of their money, was proposed by Mr. Lewis to the pit and galleries — the boxes on the first night of a season seldom are troubled with anything but paper.

There were some occasional colloquies between the groundlings and the managers, with the usual advantage on the side of him who speaks from an eminence. Lewis on these occasions was always

finely tempered and manly; he was never cringing, his respect had no affected reverence, and he was too well-bred to look dissatisfaction, and presume to direct his masters. At length he obtained his object. Cooke, it seemed, after all, by his exertions had ruptured a blood-vessel in his chest, though an iron one, and Doctor Kentish had him under his care at Newcastle. He was unable to write himself, and a Mr. Dunn acted as his private secretary upon the occasion, to make his apology to Mr. Harris. Brave punishments were prepared for him on his return to his duty. I mean, of course, his theatrical duty: that of a husband had been done away in the summer, Sir William Scott having annulled his marriage with Miss Alicia Daniels of the Bath Theatre; what "Shore" had attracted her Hastings it is useless to inquire. On the 19th of the following month he presented himself to the audience before the play in the dress of Richard, and they had the kindness to hear him. "He confessed that he had no permission to remain in the country after the commencement of the town season, regretted the disappointment he had occasioned, and besought their indulgence to his future efforts."

A biographer of the stage, who wishes the re-

spectability of what he loves, is hurt beyond measure to see the prevalence of so contemptible a vice as drunkenness among players. At first, some little excuse is made for the man, in the recollection that his original habits may have been low, and that some stimulus may be required to excite in the really distressed their melancholy mirth. The next is that of Cassio himself; that they have "poor and unhappy brains for drinking;" so indeed it should seem, if by six o'clock in the day they are unable to conduct themselves discreetly. They should remember that their profession is now considered liberal; and not condemned to "wakes and fairs and market-towns," as formerly, the horn of the player should not be dry at all hours. The inspiration even of madeira may bestow rather mummery than character, and I can never think that an actor becomes more amusing as he becomes less articulate. A degree of impudence, too, is associated with this habit; the man will attempt the business of a character, who has lost the language of it, and the author is supposed deficient in point, or vulgar in diction, because the point is too troublesome to the buffoon, and he had rather run on with his own illiterate gabble.

The love of music was now growing fast upon us, and Mrs. Billington, in my judgment the most accomplished of all English singers, divided her favours equally between the two patent theatres. For this devotion of herself, from October to the April following, she drew from each treasury £2,000, that is, including £500 for a benefit, and she commenced at Covent Garden on the 3d of October, in Mandane, which she repeated on the 8th at Drury Lane. While this enchanting warbler and beautiful woman was "amazing the faculties of eyes and ears" at Kemble's Theatre, his nephew, Henry Siddons, made his *début* at the other house. He chose to do so in a character called Herman, an industrious humane son, whose mother and sister are entirely dependent upon him. The play was called "Integrity," and might be written by himself, for the character of Herman in the essential points resembled his own. Nothing but youth could excuse the sanguine weakness of such a commencement, — the play was good for little, and he might have acted Hamlet at first, for it immediately followed. I found him a hoarse Kemble, without his grace. He was a scholar, and extremely fond of acting, but he had a defect which crippled all his action, — he could not walk.

Whether he had contracted his narrow circle of motion from a small theatre, or there was, which I rather incline to think, some defect, though not apparent, in his frame, I cannot decide; but it took away much of the earnestness of his action, and kept him always from attaining the heroic. If he remained in London he was in opposition to his own family, and could only be of importance by equalling them in power. He used to think himself persecuted by Mr. Kemble, but was on cordial terms with his Uncle Charles, who was one year only younger than himself. At Covent Garden Theatre he found an accomplished wife in Miss Murray, whom he espoused in June, 1802. He acted in town at Drury Lane Theatre, when his uncle had left it, and settled himself afterward in the management of the Edinburgh Theatre. It may be worth remembering that in 1782 he acted the child to his mother's Isabella, on the classical plan of mingling the personal with the assumed affections.

I have noticed the commencement of Mrs. Billington's extraordinary undertaking; on the 21st of October she had sung through two acts of "Artaxerxes," when she was suddenly taken ill, and a succession of fits of the most distressing

kind prevented her from finishing Mandane. The cause was discovered by Mr. Heaviside, who extracted an entire needle from the arm below the right shoulder, and the place from which it was taken assuming a black appearance, the terror of apprehended mortification quite overset her nerves. She took till the 4th of November to recruit herself, and then gave the "Duenna" at both houses. Till then, that opera had never been acted at Sheridan's own theatre; and, on this occasion, Quick, the original Isaac Mendoza, played to a most astonishing house. As to the music of "Clara," one might have supposed "Adieu, Thou Dreary Pile," difficult enough for the admirers of vocal celerity; but Mrs. Billington introduced an exotic by Nasolini, which rendered her hearers quite breathless with astonishment.

At Drury Lane, Mr. Kemble got up his Zanga in more than usual perfection, and to commemorate the strange peace just made, revived "King Henry the Fifth, or the Conquest of France," supporting the martial Harry with a spirit that was now all his own.

Reynolds had been shooting "Folly as It Flies" for thirty nights together at Covent Garden; but, with the first comic actress in the world, Drury

Lane had no novelty till, in March, 1802, Cumberland ventured "Lovers' Resolutions" without her.

At length, poaching at Twickenham among Lord Orford's papers, a comedy was found, written it is possible by General Conway, and called "Fashionable Friends." This piece had been licensed already by the private acting of the gentry commemorated — though more complete scoundrels never dishonoured any rank of human creatures.

The two leading men of fashion, one married, and the other about to be, were boys at the same school — youths at the same college — inhabitants of the same town. Nature, accordingly, would seem to ensure them the common effects of old habits, a sincere regard, and desire to promote each other's interest and happiness. The interpreters of fashion about Strawberry Hill thus translate the friendship, which they do not profess, but actually show to each other. The bachelor labours to seduce the husband's wife, and the husband, in revenge, tries to frustrate the bachelor's expected union. Both men of infinite sentiment. Mrs. Jordan, this time, is not the seduced; she is only the disappointed; but lively enough to bear the name of Racket, a word which closely describes

the smart hits of the dialogue. Miss Decamp, having been elevated to the very stars by Mr. Spencer, in Urania, is here the abstract perfection of a fashionable lady, in the opinion of Strawberry Hill. Lady Selina is followed, copied, and admired. Under an affected languor of constitution, and the most romantic professions of friendship, this lady conceals a head devoted to intrigue, a heart dead to both principle and honour, and desires the most sensual, loose, and abandoned. The unrefined pit would not bear this "faultless monster" of fashion, and, ignorantly, I suppose, condemned it as unnatural. She was, however, indulged with an epilogue, which seemed morally to belong to the character she had acted; for it gave her vote for peace with France, and the reasons were all of a profligate cast, — fresh supplies of handsome men, the nightly ball and frequent masquerade, a rule of pleasure, and a revival of usury!

> "Exulting fashion hails the happy league;
> Hence love of cards, and leisure for intrigue
> Credit and curricles, and dice increase,
> Racing, and all the useful arts of peace."

On the 29th of April peace was proclaimed, and Cobbett, an American bookseller, in Pall Mall,

wrote to a noble lord to request a guard of soldiers, to preserve his windows from demolition, "as he did not intend to illuminate." The noble lord very sensibly remarked to this journalist that, if the king's subjects in general were equally obstinate, it would be a matter of some difficulty to protect them all.

On this occasion, I remember, Mr. Bull made a lamentable mistake, from having left his spelling-book at home, when he started to visit M. Otto, in Portman Square. His preparations for display were critically examined, and by daylight. He had selected the expressive word "Concord," which had been executed in the first style of vitreous proportion; but never was there a choice so unfortunate; it was voted to be an insult and a lie — for "France had not conquer'd England." M. Otto, finding that he had offended the sovereign people, though for his soul he could not conceive how, came out, at last, to put either himself or them right; he soon discovered that the schoolmaster had not yet been abroad, whatever might be expected, and finding that they all of them reprobated his motto as hostile, he condescended to put them up "Amity" in the place of concord, a very satisfactory substitute. What remained

now was trifling, — the two letters G. R. were discovered, by some sailors, to have no crown over them, and they insisted that the republican plenipo should have one, in respect to his Majesty, the King of England. An excellent precedent, which was recollected in America, while on the stage, by George Frederick Cooke, who ordered the band in the orchestra to play "God Save the King," to astonish the wondering Yankees, and took off his own hat to teach them how to honour George the Third, their lawful sovereign.

But a truce with subjects that touch upon political feelings. I am happily occupied on a smaller stage. Mrs. Jordan, on the 24th of May, acted Lady Teazle for the benefit of the veteran King, who then retired from the stage with a very enviable portion of public and private respect. Before I relate what occurred after the play, I take the opportunity to point out the way in which the Country Girl acted Lady Teazle. She differed essentially from her predecessors in this, that, as to them, the six months of fashionable life had totally divested them of their original habits, — they did not act the fine lady; they seemed never to have occupied any other station than the one present. Mrs. Jordan thought the rather coarse

pleasantries which her ladyship lavishes upon Sir Peter were more in the tone of her former than her present condition, and she, therefore, returned to its frank and abrupt discontent; she quarrelled with her old rustic petulance, and showed her natural complexion; her rouge and her *finesse* she reserved for artificial life. She wanted the recovering dignity of Abington to advance before the prostrate screen; but her voice aided her very natural emotion, and, though she was not superior in the part, she merited consideration, and to be compared with the printed play rather than the manner in which it had been acted. I now revert to Sir Peter.

King had been a town actor for the amazing period of fifty-four years; his first appearance was in Alworth, in the "New Way to Pay Old Debts," on the 19th October, 1748. King had more of Garrick's friendship than any other actor ever enjoyed; he was respectful but never servile before his great master, who sent him his dress foil when he quitted the stage, as the legacy of professional death. It probably now (to use Garrick's words) dangled for the last time by his own side in the part of Sir Peter Teazle.

I saw him from the pit, and he played the char-

acter extremely well, and in the language was quite perfect. King had a habit of repeating, without voice, everything addressed to him by another character, so that he never remitted his attention to the business for a moment; his lips were always employed, and he was, probably, master of the language of every scene he was engaged in. His old men have been supplied with kindred, and sometimes equal power, but his saucy valets have never been approached.

Cumberland wrote an address for him which might serve the profession to the end of time. Sheridan, in the monody for Garrick, had said, very happily:

> "The actor only shrinks from Time's award."

Cumberland, feeling more for himself than the actor, actually put the poet's triumph in the actor's mouth, and I smiled when poor King faltered out the vanity of what follows:

> "The poet, nearly breathless, lame, or blind,
> Whilst the muse visits his creative mind,
> Continues wearing his immortal wreath,
> Lives in his fame, and triumphs over death."

This was no consolation whatever to him who had so often embodied his conceptions and filled up his sometimes meagre outline. He shook him

off as an excrescence that unnecessarily grew to him, and dropped him with the poor couplet that concluded :

> " That chance has come to me, that comes to all ;
> My drama done, I let the curtain fall."

Charles Kemble, who had always taste enough to do a graceful thing, came on to attend him, as Orlando does old Adam, in this painful trial ; ready to prompt him with the words, if his memory should desert him. That office discharged, he left him to stand the brunt of an applause that literally thundered to his very heart. He expressed his profound sensibility by repeated bows, and at the exact moment Mrs. Jordan came on the stage, absolutely beautiful from the interest she took, and led the father of the stage from the presence of the public to a seat in the greenroom.

After a slight breathing-time, Mr. Dowton advanced to Mr. King, and invited him to take a cheerful draught out of a silver cup, which he presented to him. He then said " that his brothers and sisters of the sock and buskin requested him to accept the cup, and a salver that belonged to it, as a trifling token of their regard, and a grateful remembrance of his merit as a comedian, and his

uniformly friendly conduct to them all, during the many years that he had continued to please the public before the curtain, and endear himself to them behind it." Mr. King made a suitable return to this, and then all the ladies and gentlemen present drank his health.

The cup bears the names of those who contributed to it, and also the following motto on its base from Shakespeare's "Henry V.," act fifth;

> "If he be not fellow with the best king,
> Thou shalt find him the best king of good fellows."

The salver, richly decorated, bore Mr. King's arms in the centre.

It was now well known in the theatre, that Mr. Kemble, who had succeeded Mr. King formerly in the management, now resigned it himself, and intended to pass the summer upon the Continent. All connection in the property was now out of the question, and on the 24th of June, after Mrs. Jordan's performance of Viola in "Twelfth Night," Mr. Kemble spoke his last acknowledgments on the stage of Drury, in behalf of the proprietors, the performers, and himself.

> "Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu!
> He'll shape his old course in a country new."

Mr. Kemble's salary, as actor and manager, at this time was £56 14*s.* per week. He was now in the forty-sixth year of his age, had no child to provide for, and his brother Charles, as an actor, wanted no encouragement, and, in his proper line, dreaded no rival. With all this positive blessedness in his condition, he became anxious to purchase what Garrick, similarly situated, had been anxious to sell; and, finally, left the theatre, in which his fame and fortune had been established, for a rival concern, conducted upon very different principles; in which his name was held in no esteem, and every existing interest was, for very cogent reasons, indeed, opposed to him. I think I have heard, at "the very error of the moon," something like a wish for a theatre to be called by his name. That last infirmity, then, of noble minds ruined his establishment here, and drove him at length into exile, where he prematurely expired.

When Lewis returned thanks at the other house the following night, he said that the season just closed had proved the most prosperous in the annals of the theatre. What a calamity to have brilliant wit and oratory at the head of a mercantile concern! Now, however, Drury had nothing that it could rely upon, except Mrs. Jordan and

Bannister. The latter, in the French idiom, accepted the portfolio of Mr. Kemble as acting manager, but there was nothing in it.

> "A thousand bright ideas fill'd his mind,
> But with the clouds they fled, and left no racke behind."

The Haymarket season solicits our attention by an attempt of its spirited proprietor to free himself from the fetters which the winter patentees had riveted upon him. It was announced at the close of the season to the audience, by Mr. Fawcett. The novelties of the summer need not detain us long. "Beggar My Neighbour," if so vulgar a title could proceed from Morton, was damned the first night. I myself translated to Sicily the "Judgment of Solomon," a French piece, by Caigniez. The critics amused themselves with stating how little I had done for it at great length; the reason might be, that Mrs. Inchbald, strongly connected with that band, had done the same piece for Mr. Harris. When she came to read hers in the greenroom of Covent Garden, it was voted inferior to the summer manufacture, and dropped. Colman wrote a beautiful epilogue for the piece, and it was acted, I remember, on the last night of the season; for when the curtain went down upon

the "Voice of Nature," Fawcett came forward, as the voice of the manager, to read an address written by Mr. Colman, on his peculiar situation. The points were these: Mr. Foote's patent permitted him to play from the 15th of May to the 15th of September, inclusive. The elder Colman had a license to act during the same term; as, however, his company were mostly servants of the winter patentees, his season began to be narrowed by the giant encroachments on the pigmy establishment. The younger Colman succeeded to the license and bought the property. Colman contested nothing with the giants; they had the power to act all the year if they chose to do so; he made no complaint against them; but as to his own period, he declared his intention to occupy every night of it; to do this, it became essential to have performers unfettered by other engagements. Mr. Fawcett now came to the peroration, which was a little injured by the figure of speech. I quote the words: "There are but three houses permitted to give you regular batches of plays in London; and this house (by far the most humble) sees no reason, when they will be all making their bread on the 15th of next May, why even 'three of a trade should not perfectly agree.'" He then promised that the

country around should be skirred for new talents, and some old friends; and the best of all his promises, he promised that he himself would write again for his own theatre.

All that occurs upon this scheme, is that, if it brought any stars to town, the winter proprietors would soon cause them to shoot from their narrow sphere, and, as to his opening on the 15th of May, it could do them no harm; he would only be opposing the performers' benefits, and the ticket nights, always thrown to the end of the season. Previous, moreover, to the close of the great houses, it was almost a certainty that the Haymarket would act to a nightly loss. There was one line of conduct safe, and only one, to get an excellent company, and write a new comedy, himself, and open with it, or nearly so. People love to get into a summer box, out of their winter halls, and a smart novelty would be sure to attract them. If Colman could bring himself to reject the winter temptations to him to write for the great houses, — if, when like the governor of Tilbury Fort, he heard the offer of a thousand pounds, and found his conscience whispering "your little Zoar," — he could silence his poverty, and remember his pledge to make hay only while

the sun shines, there might be more than hopes of ultimate success.

This summer, Mrs. Jordan acted at Richmond occasionally, and she accepted an engagement for six nights, at Margate, for which, on her usual terms, she received £180 and a clear benefit. By some accident, in the last act of the "Country Girl," her dress caught fire. The audience were thrown into great consternation, but happily the flame was soon extinguished, and the charming woman received no personal injury. She made the proper return to the affectionate gratulation of the audience.

Mr. Bannister being now manager of the theatre, under a board (I was going to say of magistrates), comedy was likely to assume the ascendant, for, indeed, it was his only force. He opened on the 16th of September, with the "Inconstant." Mrs. Jordan, Bisarre; Mrs. Young (*ci-devant* Biggs), Oriana; Duretête, himself; Old Mirabel, Suett; and Young Mirabel (the best thing he does), Charles Kemble. The slip-slop writers seem to have set their critical wits upon the demolition of Farquhar, as if their very existence depended upon it.[1] He has, it is true,

[1] See the preface to the play, in the "Modern Theatre."

made four very amusing acts out of whim, and talked four characters into our good graces, before he begins with business; but the fifth act is an admirable fact, that interests every nerve in the spectators; and the two men are so well contrasted, and the two ladies mystify their men so divertingly, that it is ungrateful not to be pleased with it. Farquhar's sixth night failed, it seems, but not the sixth hundredth.

The 25th of the month showed us a substitute for King, in that very clever actor, Cherry, who appeared in Sir Benjamin Dove, in the "Brothers," and, as a master in his profession, on the same night he acted also Lazarillo, in "Two Strings to Your Bow." He not only filled the cast, in a great measure, of King, but seemed equally fitted to that of Dodd, and could go nearly to the breadth of Munden, little as he was. Cherry was a native of Limerick, cotemporary with Mrs. Jordan, and his father was a bookseller. He therefore could not say, with John Taylor, that he "left no calling for his idle trade," for the mystery of printing was unfolded to him, and all its "shadowy types" solicited his eye — but in vain! If the scene of Cherry's life that occurred to him at Athlone, in all its houseless, penniless,

and starving terrors, could have been anticipated, like Rasselas, he might have found an incentive to proceed, rather than a dissuasive from his course, and have exclaimed, "I wish to prove the force of my mind under casualties of such a description."

As soon as he found himself fixed at Drury Lane, and Mrs. Jordan the soul of it, he determined to call up his literary talents, and compose a play that should exhibit her to advantage. In this he succeeded, as we shall show with pleasure, in the due order of time.

When David Garrick was told by any tyro in the art, that he thought of acting "Hamlet," he used to turn his piercing eyes quickly upon the candidate, and favour him with a question of surprise. "Eh! — how! — what! Hamlet the Dane?" Now what Garrick meant, is clear enough. But his Majesty, George the Third, had a similar exclamation ready, when he heard that George Cooke intended to perform the Prince of Denmark; for it was Hamlet the Dane only that Cooke could possibly resemble.

> "They clepe as drunkards, and with swinish phrase
> Soil our addition."

And the custom of the country —

"Keeps wassel, and the swagg'ring upspring reels,
And as he drains his draught of Rhenish down," — etc.

When Kemble first acted Hamlet in London, in his ambition to display all princely accomplishments, he seemed to fence and bow too professionally, and Taylor, I think, in an epigram, alluded to the union of Hamlet and Osrick, in his performance. In the Hamlet of Cooke he might have found, with more accuracy, the unnatural union of the prince and the usurper. Cooke would have been greatly benefited by an infusion of Osrick's polite manners. The king alluded to thought Lord Thurlow would have been equally fit for the character; but he was not the chancellor, who resembled Hamlet — *ecce signum!* as Falstaff would say. Hamlet is a character of indecision.

"Sure, he that made us, with such large discourse,
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and God-like reason,
To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple,
Of thinking too precisely on the event, —
(A thought which quarter'd hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward), I do not know
Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do —
Sith I have cause and strength and means to do it."
— *Hamlet*, act iv.

Cooke, in addition to his awkward action, his harsh, cynical tone, and his little affinity to "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," spoke a text which, for its imperfect jargon, challenged the weakest memories among the audience. I had among my papers once a list of his choice readings, which this Danish prince pronounced as authentic Shakespeare, — some of them were not his fault, but his unhappiness ; for, in his youth, a clergyman lent him a complete set of Shakespeare's plays, which had been edited, I found, by Warburton ; and as that commentator never doubted himself, he placed all his conjectures in the text, where Cooke found and adopted them. They were often perverse, but looked subtle, and therefore suited Cooke's cast of thinking, whenever he did think.

His most "beatified" Ophelia, on this occasion, was a Miss Reeve, the daughter of the composer, and in order to show his own skill in composition, he reset, most scientifically, all the *reliques* of old ballads, which Ophelia's distraction so pathetically chaunts that her nothings are much more than matter. The absurdity did not escape the audience, but they would not visit it upon the young lady, whose talents as a musician might have been

employed without sacrilege. Art should only be the modest handmaid to nature, on such occasions as the present.

If ever I put my hand again upon the choice readings of Hamlet the Dane, I will have them printed, because it is far from an impossibility that we may yet see other Hamlets "o'ertaken in their rouse;" and when an actor "puts an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains," the more nonsense he utters the better. *Videlicet* — for "most excellent fancy," read or speak, if you can articulate, "most extensive faculty."

I am here called aside from the stage and its heroes to record the death of the great painter to whom we are indebted for the likeness of Mrs. Jordan. That Mrs. Jordan should sit to Romney was a choice of entire harmony. "He was," says Cumberland, "a rapturous advocate for Nature, and a close copyist, abhorring from his heart every distortion or unseemly violation of her pure and legitimate forms and proportions. An inflamed and meretricious style of colouring he could never endure, and the contemplation of bad painting sensibly affected his spirits and shook his nerves." These were, indeed, of aspen delicacy, and his sensibility was even distressing, — a noble sentiment

at any time, read from a book or springing from the living volume in conversation, never failed to draw tears into his eyes, and his applause was uttered with a tremor upon his voice.

Romney did not visit the great, though he painted them; he was shy and retiring, and loved to possess himself in the privacy of an almost silent occupation, at which he laboured as long as light sufficient could be obtained. The only noble whose table he visited much was Lord Thurlow, the greatness of whose mind indulged itself in the plainest and most unaffected manners; and the lion and the lamb now sat down together with a preference for the society of each other. It might have been imagined that he would at least visit Sir Joshua Reynolds, his only rival, and whom he admired sincerely, though he did not imitate him. But Romney would have died under the great resort of visitors at Sir Joshua's table; where Burke and his followers kept conversation for ever on the stretch, and where Romney, however proudly or accurately he might think, would have been too conscious of defective education to give utterance to his thoughts.

Among the few associates who loved him, he would indulge himself in occasional reveries, and

then, like one inspired, in very expressive language, and much earnestness of voice and manner, pour out a series of remarks on subjects either relative to his art or its rival poetry, that were always original and often sublime. His manner, on these occasions, was hurried and impassioned; he appeared to be too much excited for his own comfort, and his friends managed him by a thermometer, which their affection quietly applied to his temperature. He did not exhibit with the Academy, and thus escaped the miserable factions in that assembly, and the persecution with which they often smother, rather than foster, the rising merit around them. Two dirty hangmen have it in their power, and seldom want the inclination, to inflict in this way a wound from which a timid nature never may recover.

Mr. Romney was born at Dalton, in Furness, in the county of Lancaster, on the 15th of December, 1734, O. S. He was the second son of a numerous family, and his father was a cabinet-maker, and brought up a son to the same profession after he had received such an education as could be given at a school about four miles from his house, for which the charge of the Rev. Mr. Fell was five shillings per quarter. The body was rather more

expensive than the mind. Mr. Gardner, of the same place, boarded him at £. 10*s.* per annum, within a trifle of three pence *per diem.*

But the innate genius that was in Romney bore him through all difficulties. As soon as he could handle the tools of his trade, he began to carve fiddles for the rustics, and therefore soon made a noise in the world. The next step to framing the instrument was acquiring the use of it. He fashioned one superior violin for himself, and kept it through life. The quality of tone was not bad by any means; and he used to indulge his friends by a voluntary of his own fancy, executed on the fiddle he had made, in an apartment of his own house, hung around with pictures, historical, fanciful, and portrait, all excellent and painted by his own hand.

In 1764 he visited Paris with his friend Mr. Greene for six weeks, and was greatly delighted with the galleries of art there. In 1767 he concerted a longer flight with Ozias Humphrey, and advanced his studies in Rome itself. He was always frugal, and let no temptations in the world divert him from the proper business of his life. On his return to town, he took the house that had been Mr. Coates's, with its excellent painting

rooms, on the south side of Cavendish Square, and as the house is devoted to art, the reader may still find a painter's name upon the door; aye, and an excellent violin inside of it, with a poet's pen, too, quarterly, in the escutcheon, and a gentleman professing the art in Sir Martin Archer Shee, now president of the Royal Academy.

Romney realised a fortune by his pencil, though not a splendid one. He retired in the decline of life to Kendal, where he had the affectionate attentions of his wife to his last moments; and he lies buried at his native place, Dalton, having within a month completed sixty-eight years of a very sensitive but laborious existence. He left one son to lament him, the Rev. John Romney.

CHAPTER V.

Bannister's Administration, or All the Talents He Could Get — Collins — S. Kemble — Natural Falstaffs — Obesity Never Pleasing — Midas and the Immortals Really Ascending — Foote's Hamlet — Pope — Sir Richard Ford Issues His Warrant for Colonel Despard — C. Kemble's Foil — Mr. Turner — Angelo's Opinion of Him as a Fencer — Holcroft's "Hear both Sides" Heard, but Not Liked — A Preface; Every One Will Not Sell for a Guinea — "John Bull," Written by Colman for Covent Garden — Curious Challenge of the Little Manager — The "Marriage Promise," by Allingham — Mrs. Jordan's Emma Harvey — The Author Curtails "Falstaff's Wedding," for R. Palmer — Hamlet the Dane, His Excesses — Death of James Aickin, Misses Kemble in the Field — And the Author — Colman Opens on the 15th of May — Charles Mathews at Home — Old Wiggins — Mrs. Litchfield Reëstablishes the Dane again — Joins with Mrs. Jordan in a Kindness to Poor Lee Lewes — The Violante Nervous — Mrs. Litchfield's Attention to Her — Astley's Theatre Burnt — Death of Tate Wilkinson — Death of Jos. Richardson, a Proprietor of Drury — Richardson's Funeral — Mrs. Jordan Establishes Her First Family in Golden Square.

ANNISTER commenced his viceroyalty with a ministry broken to pieces by deaths and desertions. He therefore invited all the talents to be found in the country to support his government, and among these he soon

reckoned not only Cherry, but Collins, a very efficient man in the home department. Stephen Kemble, too, added great weight to the concern, and sported with lucky pleasantry upon his own size in a prologue which he wrote for Bannister. To use a phrase of the great author, Kemble, one way, was qualified to act Falstaff, — he did "bear a brain;" he understood well what he said, but in his conception he rather appeared to follow Quin than Henderson, — he was more noisy and vigorous than voluptuous and witty. He seemed to act the part rather than think it. You did not see the humour fermenting in his goblet. As to his size as a requisite, enormous positive obesity is never pleasing; it is better to look a mummy than be one. Reality on the stage sometimes is a defect, — I should no more demand a natural belly for Falstaff than a natural hump for King Richard. Apparent form is all that the actor requires, let his art do the rest, and the more he is compelled to exert it the greater his merit.

On the 15th of December, after a second address, which he now spoke himself in the dress of Falstaff, Mr. S. Kemble took his leave, quite satisfied with his town experiment, and returned to his company, not to march them "through

Coventry, but to join them at Newcastle. He was confined to the performance of a few characters from his bulk; but as the representative of the firm and manly, he was worthy of the name he bore.

"Midas" was revived this season, and brought them excellent half price. A deep and substantial stage was placed now under the feet of the immortals, and at the ringing of the prompter's bell "the wood began to move." In fact, the whole platform, with its enormous weight, was, by machinery, elevated forty feet from the permanent stage, and revolving clouds at length shut them from the sight of the spectators, and the prospect below opened naturally to the view.

A Mr. Foot, a Winchester scholar, and by profession a printer, attempted Hamlet at this theatre, on the 12th of November. He was a sensible man at all events, but he had only served an apprenticeship to Alderman Nicholls, and tried an establishment at Drury without being free of the company. Pope, however, was now the substitute for John Kemble; and if not, like that great actor, a first rate, certainly a very respectable substitute; and, most assuredly, the three kingdoms could not then supply a better.

Sir Richard Ford claims at least a passing notice in the present work, as having been once, it was believed, permanently united to Mrs. Jordan. His warrant as a magistrate secured the famous Edward Karcus Despard and his gang, who were apprehended on a charge of high treason. It produced a charge from Lord Ellenborough to the grand jury much too excellent to drop with the occasion; indeed it marked clearly for ever the duties of a grand juror. The finding or the ignoring a bill is not a matter of form, and throwing everything upon the jury who try the cause. Persons are not hastily to be subjected even to prison and acquittal. Sir Richard Ford conducted the execution of Despard, and such as were found guilty on the trial.

A Mr. Turner, the barrister, who attempted Macbeth at Covent Garden Theatre, now much improved, played Richard the Third, at Drury Lane; he even repeated the character; but in the duel between himself and Charles Kemble the foil of the latter entered his mouth, and a considerable quantity of blood flowed from the wound. After a slight suspension of the business, Mr. C. Kemble came forward, and expressed his happiness that the injury had been but trivial. I wish,

like the French, we could do away with all these fencing matches upon the stage, where the skill is so little likely to be equal, and awkwardness may be fatal. Not very long since, I asked my old acquaintance Angelo who was his best theatrical pupil? He did not hesitate a moment, but said Charles Kemble. We had also an opportunity of welcoming Mrs. Glover to Drury Lane, as Mrs. Oakley, among the new stars this season.

On the 29th of January, 1803, Mrs. Jordan acted a new part of the most incongruous description, in a comedy, by Holcroft, called "Hear Both Sides." The author thought himself ill treated; I thought him fairly heard at least, and if he could have been saved Mrs. Jordan would have brought him through. He wrote a preface, I remember, but it never sold for a guinea, like Colman's. We were soon to have the first fruits of the latter gentleman's promise to write for his own theatre, in the appearance of his most attractive comedy, "John Bull," on the 5th of March, at Covent Garden. It would have run through his whole season, but then he must have got people to act it. Munden made Blanchard's fortune by refusing Sir Simon Rochdale, which he thought inferior to Job Thornberry (Fawcett's part).

Drury could not enter the lists by a comedy of equal force, for it may now be doubted whether Sheridan had left himself sufficient comic force to meet the author of "John Bull." Indeed, Colman seemed to think so, by once challenging the author of the "School for Scandal" to be locked up with him, as the cardinals are, till they agree upon a Pope, and write a comedy for the championship. I incline to think he would have beat him, because I remember to have been shown some scenes written latterly by Mr. Sheridan, for a dramatist whom he respected, and they were by no means the best in the piece, and certainly the least successful. The instances were very well known in the theatre, and the author has been my acquaintance for more than thirty years. What could be got was produced on the 16th of April; it was a five-act comedy, called the "Marriage Promise," written by Mr. Allingham, a friend of Mrs. Powell's. He had previously succeeded in some very clever afterpieces, and was a man of talent. Tandem and Consols, which the reader would himself cast to Bannister and Dowton, were the only novelties in point of character. It was an interesting, attractive, and probable piece, and the Emma Harvey of Mrs. Jordan delighted

the house with the brilliant hues of youthful imagination. Hear the sort of comfort it administers to her:

"Old age views only the dull and gloomy side of the landscape, where nodding rocks and dreadful precipices threaten the timid traveller with destruction, but my youthful fancy sees a delightful path, bedecked with fragrant shrubs and beauteous flowers, through which the cherub Hope leads the pleased wanderer to happiness and joy."

It brought, I remember, many excellent houses, and cost nothing to produce it, but the mere clothing of the day. Mr. Adviser did not in the least demur to Mrs. Jordan's accepting her character in the present comedy.

Bob Palmer was smitten with the mania of acting Falstaff, and begged that I would cut down Kenrick's capital imitation, "Falstaff's Wedding," for him to act at his benefit. I did it with considerable care, and some pleasure. Much as I knew of Kenrick's character, I could not be unjust to his talent. He has succeeded better than any man who ever attempted to walk over the same ground occupied by our inimitable bard, of whom I delight to speak in the language he has himself applied to his Cleopatra:

"Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale
His infinite variety. Other poets cloy
The appetites they feed, but he makes hungry
Where most he satisfies."

Hamlet the Dane, our friend George Cooke, was now disturbing all the arrangements of the theatre. He disappointed Munden — he disappointed Harry Johnston. He accepted a character in Lewis's "Minister," now called the "Harper's Daughter," was advertised in it for a fortnight together, and on the very night of performance sent word that he could not act that evening. Mr. Henry Siddons studied it so completely between the acts of the play that he was hardly seen to use the book at all, though he brought it on the stage with him. This was a talent which his father had to an equal extent, and is invaluable in a country theatre. Our intemperate Dane had trifled too often with the public, and they, in consequence, neglected his benefit. He had been much unsettled by the news which was now current, that everything was adjusted between Mr. Harris and Mr. Kemble, and that the latter gentleman had bought the sixth share of Covent Garden Theatre, which Mr. Lewis had recently relinquished, and consequently that he must either mend his manners, or take his

departure for that happier spot, which is the refuge of the ungovernable spirits of our theatres.

On the 17th of April we had the misfortune to lose Mr. James Aickin, an actor whose voice was music, and whose expression was benevolence. He has never been replaced as a sensible, unpresuming second-rate. His temper was not the most happy, and he had the Irish trick of calling for pistols, upon any real or imaginary grievance. He took Kemble into the field, and fired a shot at him; old Bannister arranged the distance for them, but Kemble would not return his fire, as he found himself safe. I was myself once in danger of a cartel from him, as Bobadil calls a challenge, for simply remarking that it was not at all baronial to walk about in Lord Randolph with a white handkerchief in his hand; it was much too finical, I thought, for the hardy manners of that age. Somebody, I believe, told him, very truly, that he had not a warmer admirer than myself, or, perhaps, I might have been shivered for so unwelcome a piece of criticism.

Mr. Colman kept his promise of opening his theatre the middle of May, and with a prelude which occupied Elliston and Waldron very pleasantly with candidate actors of whimsical preten-

sions. He noticed his "John Bull" himself, as, perhaps, an injury to his own theatre, and invoked the theatrical John Bull to patronise his efforts; and the good-humoured animal bellowed his applause at being saluted from the stage by his classical appellation. We now first saw in town Charles Mathews, "a comic world in one," who was speedily at home in the Haymarket, and "Old Mr. Wiggins," a farce by Allingham.

Mrs. Litchfield, whom we have already noticed as having attracted Mrs. Jordan's applause, had been engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, in a very respectable line of dramatic business, and very much distinguished herself, both in comedy and tragedy. For her benefit, on the 20th of May, 1803, she had put up "King John," and the query was, whether our Hamlet the Dane would act the part of the King to her Constance, or not. He had cut both Munden and Harry Johnston; but *place aux dames* might some way or other invite him from the bottle. He made an apology as to the "Minister, or Harper's Daughter," and said "there were many things in his part that he admired, but that he had been confined to his bed four and twenty hours, by very violent disorder." As there could be no doubt of this fact, he was

permitted to act King John on the present occasion, and played it very finely.

Mrs. Jordan, we have often said, was happy to aid her brethren of the stage, and there was just now an opportunity of bestowing comfort upon the few remaining days of Charles Lee Lewes, a comedian of the Woodward class, and, like him, an excellent ground Harlequin. Forty years had beheld him on the stage, and usually the victim of what was called the tyranny of management, but this, like most charges, has two sides. One manager at least did not refuse him the use of his theatre, for Mr. Harris allowed him a benefit at Covent Garden, with such strength in his bill as he could assemble together.

His play on this occasion was the "Wonder," in which, for the last time, he himself acted Lissardo, and he played it in the style of his great master, and very divertingly. Mrs. Jordan was the Violante of the evening. I forget who was her Don Felix. Mrs. Litchfield undertook to recite Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" for him, and, having gone early to the theatre, had dressed herself and was come down-stairs, when Mrs. Jordan saluted her, and complained of the nervous state in which she felt herself upon the occasion; to prove to

her that there was no romance in the assertion, she took her hand and placed it upon her heart, which, in fact, was usually in her mouth. "Now," said she, "you are a good, kind creature, will you take the book to the wing, and prompt me if I should be at a loss?" To this the other lady consented at once, and attended her through the part. Whether the different house, or the different lover, or any interval since she had acted the character might have alarmed her, there is no saying, but there are performers, both male and female, who are nervous for life. Among my theatrical acquaintance, I think that Hercules in bulk, old Charles Bannister, was the most nervous.

The benefit proved a very good one, but few indeed were the days it cheered, for poor Lee Lewes, after supping with that entertaining man Townsend, the mimic, and some other friends, was found dead in his bed on the 23d of July, 1803. He was in his sixty-third year at the close. He died of water in the chest.

The Haymarket this season produced some novelties, if not plays, by the manager. His "Love Laughs at Locksmiths," under the awful name of Arthur Griffenhoofe, of Turnham Green,

has diverted the country more or less every succeeding year. I presume this terrible appellation was suggested to the manager by the proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, Ralph Griffiths, who, I knew, had a house at Turnham Green,[1] as, indeed, was the case with Kemble himself, in bad odour from the "Iron Chest." Mr. Colman had been warmly patronised by the king and the royal family in his scheme of resistance to the winter patentees, and had received a variety of hints that his pen would be acceptable in the chastisement of the actual sovereign of France, the Consul Napoleon Buonaparte. He accordingly wrote for me an epilogue to the "Maid of Bristol," which was spoken by Elliston with an animation that in his best time belonged only to himself. As

[1] He died there, in fact, on the 28th of the following month of September, in the 83d year of his age. He was an LL. D., and commenced the *Monthly Review* in the year 1749. He gave a Sunday dinner for many years to the contributors to his work, and to literary friends whom he valued. The work still exists, and is really a *Review* of the passing literature of the country. The difference between that work and some others did not escape the acuteness of Voltaire on the subject of the immortal "Esprit des Lois," of the President Montesquieu. He said it should have been called "De l'Esprit sur les Loix." So we now see essays that evince the original powers of the writer in the *Review* instead of criticisms that display the faults or the merits of the author of the work reviewed.

his friendship bestowed it upon my play, of which I cannot be vain, for I could never dramatically please myself (whatever sundry buffoons have been pleased to say of me), I will indulge the excusable vanity of rejoicing that I furnished the occasion of so brilliant a composition. If anything literary had been rewarded in the administration of William Pitt, the author should have received a pension of a thousand a year.

Epilogue to the Maid of Bristol.

"In times like these, the sailor of our play,[1]
Much more than common sailors has to say; —
For Frenchmen, now, the British tars provoke,
And doubly tough is every heart of oak!
Ready to die or conquer, at command,
While all are soldiers who are left on land.
Each English soul's on fire, to strike the blow
That curbs the French — and lays a Tyrant low.
Sweet wolf! — how lamb-like! — how, in his designs,
'The maiden modesty of Grimbald' shines!
Strifes he concludes 'twixt nations who agree;
Freedom bestows on states already free;
Forcing redress on each contented town,
The loving ruffian burns whole districts down;
Clasps the wide world, like death, in his embrace;
Stalks guardian butcher of the human race;

[1] Ben Block, — performed by Mr. Elliston.

And, aping the fraternity of Cain,
Man is his brother only to be slain.

"And must religion's mantle be profan'd,
To cloak the crimes with which an atheist's stain'd?
Yes; the mock saint, in holy motley dress'd,
Devotion's Public Ledger, stands confess'd
Of every, and no faith, beneath the sun;
'Open to all, and influenc'd by none;'
Ready he waits, to be, or not to be,
Rank unbeliever, or staunch devotee.

"Now Christians' deaths, in Christian zeal he works,
Now worships Mahomet to murder Turks;
Now tears the Creed, and gives free-thinking scope,
Now dubb'd 'Thrice Catholic,' he strips a Pope.
A mongrel Mussulman, of papal growth,
Mufti or monk, now neither, or now both;
At mosque, at church, by turns, as craft thinks good,
Each day in each — and every day in blood!

"God! must this mushroom despot of the hour
The spacious world encircle with his pow'r?
Stretching his baneful feet from pole to pole,
Stride Corsican Colossus of the whole?
Forbid it, Heaven! — and forbid it, man!
Can men forbid it? — yes: the English can.
'Tis theirs, at length, to fight the world's great cause,
Defend their own, and rescue others' laws.

"What Britons would not, were their hairs all lives,
Fight for their charter, for their babes and wives;
And hurl a tyrant from his upstart throne,
To guard their king securely on his own?"

"Nicodemus in Despair" was produced on the 31st of August. I suppose Colman had it from his friend Berkley Craven, for it had been done at the Margravine of Anspach's private theatre, and been rapturously applauded there. But the truth was, that the incidents were too trifling for even a summer theatre. Breaking china is excellent, we admit — scalding a master's legs is a good serving-man's trick. So was letting the canary birds loose, in order to clean their cage, and if a cat should fly at higher game than a country mouse, humanely breaking her legs, to correct her instinct, is allowable sport, perhaps, everywhere but upon the stage. Nicodemus is in absolute despair when he recapitulates his mischances, and seeing sundry bottles labelled poison in the room, he drinks one of them as a finish, and makes his mother and sister drunk, like himself, with the rest. The author not being in the house, Elliston withdrew it, in reliance that his good sense would acquiesce in its retirement from the public displeasure.

After an interval of only nine years, Astley's Amphitheatre was consumed again, on the 2d September, 1803. The horses were all saved. Mrs. Astley, Jr.'s mother lost her life, and some forty houses were destroyed by the conflagration.

Tate Wilkinson

Engraved in mezzotint by Sears

A great many poor suffered by the flames, and some by the thieves, to whom a calamity like the present is a lucky hit. Astley was not insured effectually. In the meantime Mr. Astley, Sr., effected his escape from France. He got permission to go to Piedmont for his health; then took French leave down the Main; from the Main he passed to the Rhine, and took his time to Husum, where he heard the disasters of his family.

We cannot omit here to mention the death of Mrs. Jordan's early friend, Tate Wilkinson; that diverting original, admirable mimic, honest manager, and most friendly man. To his "Wandering Patentee" I have been indebted for the early progress of my able heroine, and I lament that we have hitherto no perfect literary estimate of himself. His own rambles are entertaining, even as he writes them; but he wants method most terribly, and hurries on so rapidly, that he is compelled to return frequently, for his baggage, on the road. All the performers who were formerly in his company have not the humility to exhibit their master, to the mortification of their own self-love. Mathews is superior to such a weakness: he has publicly laughed at his own juvenile difficulties, and displayed his patron with all his peculiarities, whether

of goodness or whim. Tate might not, perhaps, be quite the Dimidium Menandri; but even of Foote, how little has been recorded! A practice has foolishly obtained of imputing to known wits all the fugitive pleasantry that seeks a parent in the world: so that we can depend on little more than the joke itself, but often see reason to question its diction, its occasion, its author, and even its country. Murphy once promised to write a life of Foote; but it ended in Foote's writing a life of Murphy: what nobody wanted, instead of that which we must now want for ever. But I know not that Murphy could have done what would have satisfied upon the subject; he was a rival wit, and a superior author; he had not the docility nor the zeal that should accompany the retailer of another man's wit or wisdom: he would not be at the pains to collect his materials from the various sources and would be too ambitious to display himself, to do complete justice to his friend. This it was that made his life of Garrick so inferior to Tom Davies's. The bookseller did not want vanity, but the actor reverenced the master of his craft. It was this feeling, added to a perfect memory, that made Boswell's record of Doctor Johnson the most striking achievement in biography.

"A man who [Johnson's] buffets and rewards,
Has ta'en with equal thanks. And blest are they
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled."

Even Malone, with the most painful accuracy, though he could and did correct and improve that work, could not have written it.

Drury Lane Theatre opened the season of 1803–04 on the 10th of September, with "Pizarro" and the "Prize;" the receipts of the night, £537 3*s.* 6*d.*, were paid into the Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's. Pope was the Rolla *vice* Kemble, transferred to Covent Garden, to which theatre Mrs. Siddons and Charles Kemble also removed, and several private boxes were arranged in their new domain for the accommodation of sundry noble supporters of that family. The house underwent more alterations on this sublime accession of tragedy to that property, and it opened under Mr. Kemble's management, as he himself thought, and indeed most other people; but by a special clause in the deed of partnership, the actual management was vested for life in Mr. Harris solely, and he could have appointed a new stage deputy the first season if he thought fit to do so. At the death of Mr. Harris I think Kemble was entitled to purchase the whole property at £150,000. In other words,

to pay so much for an old house that must be taken down, and have a new theatre to erect, then properly the House of Kemble.

During the recess, this year, Drury Lane Theatre had lost one of its proprietors, in Mr. Joseph Richardson, who died on the 9th of June, 1803, from the effects of a ruptured blood-vessel. He held a fourth share of the theatre, and, I should suppose, had been enabled to purchase by his steady patron the late Duke of Northumberland. About £38,000 were thus lost to his widow and daughters; for, when subsequently they applied to Mr. Whitbread for some compensation, he replied that he really had not nerve enough to go into the claim, and a few renters' shares, that produced little, were the only alleviation of the loss. Richardson received 15 guineas weekly from the treasury; Sheridan, 30 guineas; Tom Sheridan, £6 10*s.*; and Grubb, £9.

Richardson was a scholar and a poet; he completed his studies at St. John's College, Cambridge, and two very celebrated deans were his tutors at the university. With a strong political feeling for Whiggism, he joined with Ellis and Lawrence in the "Rolliad" and "Probationary Odes." He thus aided his party to secure the

laugh on their side; which their great rivals were contented to leave them, so long as they themselves enjoyed the honours or the patronage of office. As to the comforts of ministerial stations, they may be estimated by the sleepless energies and wasting frame of Pitt, standing alone against a revolutionary world, and unembarrassed by family, expiring, heartbroken, in poverty.

Among the usual sacrifices to the game of political ambition, are to be numbered the domestic enjoyments. The thorough-paced politician lives either at the House or the club. To his party he devotes every faculty of his soul, and assiduously avoids every scene that does not convey excitement to his darling prejudices. I remember once going with some ever dear friends to a grand entertainment given by Mr. Perry, the proprietor of the party journal. Let me say that his conduct of it was throughout a full contrast to the ruffian scurrility of some other journalists. There was a concert in his great room, where Billington and Storace and Braham, and others of great name, were the singers; and many first-rate professors, such as Shield, for instance, becoming absolutely privates in the ranks, on their respective instruments afforded us the perfection only to

be had from masters in the art. At such a moment Tom Sheridan came up to me and asked me whether I had a mind for a high treat. "I won't keep you long," said he, "you may rely upon that." He then led a few of us, among whom was George Gordon, the brother of Pryse Lockhart, a fellow of "infinite jest and most excellent fancy," to the opposite end of the building, where, standing in an armchair, with the back foremost, we saw Thomas Erskine, the prince of pleaders, but the most unfortunate of politicians, with an audience of about a dozen dry Scotch Whigs, delivering, with almost insane expression, a whole armada of political oratory. The thing was irresistible. We honoured the orator with the "Hear! hear!" very exactly imitated, of several well-known voices in the House of Commons, and effected our retreat, undiscovered by the learned and honourable gentleman.

To return to another politician. Besides their theatrical connection, there was a sincere esteem between Sheridan and Richardson; and the latter devoted to their intercourse both his time and his constitution. Home was to Sheridan a place where creditors might apply for their demands, and perhaps, sometimes, catch a glimpse of him, as

he came down the stairs in that prodigious hurry which must attend a man overwhelmed with business, and rising late. He saw everything with a single glance, and apologised for neglect in a way quite irresistible. The incumbrances of his fortune, therefore, hardly seemed to adhere to him: —

> "But like the dewdrops on the lion's mane
> Were shook to air."

When he got fairly abroad Richardson and he passed their time together. Sluggish and inert, however, as Richardson certainly was, he acted as a sort of ballast to his friend's vessel. If anything was really pressing Richardson would "speak to Sheridan about it;" and, if any man prevailed upon him, it was certainly this *fidus Achates*. He felt the loss of Richardson so as to fall into an agony of tears, and settled that he would go down to Egham and attend this dear friend's funeral. His attention to either the dead or the living was through his existence always too late. He arrived at the grave just in time to see the clergyman turning away. The name of Sheridan, however, softened the rector, and the close of the service was repeated in his presence; so that he might say,

with truth, that he had heard the words of peace and rest breathed over the remains of poor Richardson. After the interment, said my friend Taylor, who was there, the mourners dined together at the inn, and no stinted libation was poured to the memory of the departed. Wine is apt to inspire magnificence and warm our imagination beyond the sense of impediments. Sheridan projected a mausoleum to his friend, worthy the attention of John Soane, who excels all men in the poetry of his art, and Doctor Combe, the mineralogist, had some specimens of stone which would be the happiest materials for such an architect to use. Sheridan pledged himself to compose a suitable inscription which should be a model for future encomiasts, true and yet striking.

> "In funeral song, they can't equal my tone, —
> And where Pope has miscarried, I triumph alone."

But mausoleum, though a word of "exceeding good command," as our friend Bardolph expresses himself, cannot, like the lyre of Amphion, dispose the most precious stones, without the modern cement of money; though Sheridan had erected his theatre, it is true, almost in the style of the walls of Thebes.

"Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blandâ,
Ducere quò vellet."

— *Hor. de Arte Poet.*, v. 395.

Drury Lane received one capital accession in the changes consequent upon the desertion of the Kembles — Irish Johnstone, an actor of great value, chose to be at the opposite house. Harry Johnston, too, and his wife were now engaged at Drury, and they were, as melodramatists, of much consequence. As young Norval, Johnston had been long admired in the country of Home. In spectacle he was first-rate.

The union of Harris and Kemble was a thing at which all men wondered. Mr. Kemble made his first appearance in his new mansion on the 24th of September, in the character of Hamlet: Harris paid his new partner the compliment of coming down to the theatre to see him act. Reynolds told me he was so little gratified that he said, upon leaving his box: "My God! and is this all my partner can do?" We may be sure such a thing was not lost in a theatre, where alone the full perception can be had of the meaning of the phrase applied to that greatest of managers, Cleopatra, whose gentlewomen (ay, and gentlemen, too) —

"Tended her i' th' eyes,
And made their bends adornings."

Every look, every word of a manager is watched incessantly in a playhouse; and the company looked upon Kemble as a man who came to break their former system to pieces, and who was little disposed to value talents that, however successful, combined so ill with his own. Lewis, the former manager, remained the first actor in comedy; but he necessarily depended upon the novelty which the established writers of the house annually supplied; for all these Kemble entertained a sovereign contempt, if he thought at all about them. The good old comedies he conceived quite sufficient to mix up with the long list of tragedies essential to his sister and himself. Lewis was excessively popular in the theatre: he could not always please, but he got through the duty of stage-manager with urbanity and pleasantry; he lived always close to the theatre, his habits were regular, he was always cool and efficient, and to all connected with the theatre, so intimately associated, that they were covered with gloom and apprehension by the change. Kemble had long enjoyed the reputation of being a scholar, and of being pedantic in scholarship: he was accused of playing the com-

mentator, where it was of little moment, and of living upon points and pauses. It is astonishing what hatred was worked up against him, and among other absurdities, those who disliked him gifted him with black-letter tendencies, which most certainly he never had, though some friend on such a presumption gave him a Ms. of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," which it was supposed had been the favourite volume of his own Hotspur, and which he read with difficulty I know, and I am confident never read throughout. The old plays of his country he collected, because Mr. Garrick had done so before him; and besides that he thought there should be, in some library at hand, every play that could by possibility be used, that if any impositions were attempted, their source might be pointed out. If there was some ostentation in all this, it is surely a natural foible in any actor to possess the materials of his art. His plays cost him many thousand pounds, and were uniformly bound together in several hundred volumes of the quarto shape. We may be sure as to Shakespeare, the god of his idolatry, he had everything that could be got for money. He now set about revising that author's plays for his present theatre, and published them as he proceeded, in a full octavo

size. When I bound them together I asked him to letter the volume for me, and he called it "Kemble's Covent Garden Theatre."

But as I must soon quit him in his new element, I just notice his success in Lord Townley, with that lovely woman, Miss Louisa Brunton, for his lady. Like Miss Farren, she was found to possess charms of every sort worthy of a coronet, but did not, when she assumed it, take away quite so much genius from the stage. Cooke was still the Richard, and Kemble condescended to Richmond in the hope of conciliating his dear George; but when the return arrived of Cooke's condescension, namely, to act Pizarro to Kemble's Rolla, he came on knowing nothing of the language, and soon fell backwards as mute as a turtle. Happily his new friend was at hand to say that he was really ill (which everybody saw), and Mr. Henry Siddons ready to read the part for him; at which few, I imagine, could grieve. His illness had left him by the tertian intermittent, for on the twentieth he stood his ground in the character without shaking. Mrs. Siddons, as poor Richardson told Sheridan she would, had now fallen into Elvira sufficiently; and this was, perhaps, the greatest injury which the Kembles inflicted upon Drury; for

Sheridan had very indiscreetly published the play, so that any theatre could act it. He got a large sum, it is true, for the copyright.

Mrs. Jordan had no new character to the end of the year. She about this time, upon Frances, her eldest daughter's, coming of age, took a handsome house for her in Golden Square, and she became at length Mrs. Alsop. Her two sisters, Lucy and Dora, lived with her in town, but they were frequently at Bushy with their mother. I understand some old gentleman, of the name of Bettesworth, offered Miss Jordan a very handsome fortune to take his name and become his representative.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reservoirs of Some Use at Drury Lane — The "Caravan" and the Dog Carlo — Story of the Piece — Sheridan and His Preserver — "Cinderella" and her Slipper, with Venus and the Graces — Cherry's "Soldier's Daughter" — Mrs. Jordan in the Widow Cheerly — Her Epilogue, a Female Army — The "Sailor's Daughter," by Cumberland — Mrs. Jordan's Benefit — The "Middle Dish" — Bannister Returns to the Haymarket — Fawcett Makes a Ballet from the Action of Shakespeare's "Tempest" — The "Gay Deceivers" — Elliston and His Address — Master Betty at Edinburgh — Home and His "Douglas" — A Really Great Genius of the North Descending to Works below Him — Rewriting All Our Literature — Substitutes — Standard Works to Be Carefully Reprinted — The Followers of Didot — His Application at Seventy-three — Elliston at the Opera House — Mrs. Jordan Herself Opens the Season of 1804–05 in Widow Cheerly — Mathews and Elliston Now at Drury — Miss Duncan's First Night — Phantom Lathom and His "Dash" — A Fête Royal at Weymouth — Elliston and Miss Decamp — The Royal Game, and the Michaelmas Goose on a Birthday — Another Farce for Mrs. Jordan, Called "Matrimony."

NOW return a little to commemorate a striking event in the history of the National Theatre. The reservoirs, which had been prepared in the contemplation of its danger from fire, absolutely saved the concern, for

a time at least, from sinking under its burthens. I allude to the production, on the 5th of December, 1803, of a serio-comic romance, called the "Caravan," attendant upon which, in the person of a Newfoundland dog, called Carlo, Reynolds started the first formidable rival to the new management.

The story merits a few lines, though I have not read it in "Mariana." The regent of some time or other, for period is immaterial, is desperately in love with another man's wife. The lady, at least on the stage, is, as usual, a paragon of fidelity. The husband, who is a Marquis of Calatrava, is sent by the caravan from Madrid to Barcelona, with orders to the driver, who bears the discreet name of Blabbo, to starve him on the journey; but if he should be able upon the chameleon's dish, the air, to reach Barcelona, then, and in that case provided, the governor, Mr. Dowton, has sealed orders to destroy him. As to the marchioness, silly woman, she follows her husband, and for her there are brave punishments in reserve. If she does not overcome her vulgar prejudice, the marquis is to be put on board a fireship and blown up, and her son Julio is to be thrown from a rock into the sea to join the

remains of his father. "Oh, this love, this love!" But Blabbo nourishes the marquis on the journey by dividing with him the dog's meat and his own. The marquis is not blown up, though the ship is, and Carlo the dog, with his master's humanity, no sooner sees the child Julio thrown from the rock into the sea than he jumps in after him and brings him ashore in his mouth with the utmost ease.

The maternal feelings of the house had never been before at so high a pressure; the boiler was almost bursting, for here was really danger,—real water, a real dog, a real splash, and a special interposition. Well might Sheridan rush into the greenroom and call out, "Where is my preserver?" Well might the author modestly present himself, and well might the manager say, "Pooh! I meant the dog!"

The run of the dog was the triumph of four-footed sagacity; it was succeeded by the slipper of glass worn by Cinderella, and the reign of honest Carlo interrupted by Mother Goose. "Cinderella" was attributed to a gentleman of Oxford, and he very classically rescues his heroine from the doubtful patronage of witchcraft, and produces all the effects of magic by the influence of beauty and love and marriage and grace, which

the reader sees must be no less divine personages than Venus, Cupid, Hymen, and the Graces. Let me preserve the names of their mortal representatives: Mrs. Mountain; Oscar Byrne: his brother, Hymen; Bel Menage, Miss Searle, Miss Bristow; the Prince, Mr. Byrne, and Cinderella herself, Miss Decamp.

We have already noticed Mr. Cherry and his ambition to write for Mrs. Jordan. On the 7th of February, 1804, his comedy was produced, under the title of the "Soldier's Daughter." It has scenes of great interest and powerful contrast, the detection of villainy, and the restoration of family peace. The lovely spirit that presides over the destinies of all is a character called the Widow Cheerly, acted by the delightful woman with as much zeal as skill, and as though she felt its importance to herself; and it unquestionably was of the greatest, as being distinguished from either the "Romp" or the "Woman of Fashion," and attractive from vivacity, knowledge, and goodness. Mrs. Jordan had an epilogue of the true cast for effect in the times of invasion. Hear the muster of a female army:

"Should British women from the contest swerve?
We'll form a female army of reserve —

> And class them thus. Old maids are pioneers —
> Widows, sharp-shooters — wives are fusileers;
> Maids are battalion — that's all under twenty;
> And as for light troops, we have them in plenty.
> Vixens the trumpet blow — scolds beat the drum
> When thus prepar'd, what enemy will come?"

There was a kind line of recollection of her aide *De Camp* behind the scene, who had been inured to service all the winter, and the epilogue closed with an unnecessary call for indulgence, —

> "If mercy's shield protects the 'Soldier's Daughter.'"

Mrs. Jordan spoke this address beautifully. The play ran on through the season, and called into a few nights' existence a "Sailor's Daughter," by Mr. Cumberland; but the nautical heroine soon parted company, and was never heard of after.

Thus highly to his credit, in the very teeth of the most powerful confederacy that ever menaced a rival theatre, the season of 1803–04 was closed brilliantly by John Bannister, who returned thanks in person, and modestly rejoiced in the rewards of his exertions. In the summer he returned to his old station in the Haymarket, where he appeared in Fawcett's "Doctor Pangloss," and his own Walter in the "Children in the Wood."

Mrs. Jordan, for her benefit this season, after

the play of the "Hypocrite," in which she tried her strength against Mrs. Abington, accepted a farce from Mr. Oulton, a native of Dublin, to show her skill with Johnstone, in the exhibition of an Irish servant and his wife. Though there was great truth of humour displayed, the piece was defective, and dropped at the first trial. It was called the "Middle Dish, or the Irishman in Turkey." Mr. Oulton has contributed something to the history of the stage, and a few pieces to the theatrical wants of Ireland and England, but I remember nothing but a musical farce at the Haymarket, called the "Sixty-third Letter," which was set by that worthy man, Doctor Arnold.

Fawcett, in the summer, did a very clever thing in the way of a dramatic ballet, called the "Enchanted Island;" it was the whole history of Prospero and Miranda, done by the Byrnes and D'Egville, who was the Caliban; there were two Mirandas, one for each act, and the business ran thus: In the first act, the devotion of Prospero to his secret studies, the conspiracy against him, the treachery of his brother, and the exposure of Prospero and his innocent child at sea, in a rotten carcase of a boat, all admirably managed. They land on the Enchanted Island, where they are

surrounded by evil spirits, who are subdued by the powerful art of Prospero. That magician discovers Ariel in the rift of the cloven pine, where Sycorax had left him. He also encourages the timid brute Caliban, and in the full triumph of his art, the act closes with a dance of spirits, whom he calls from their confines to greet him and his daughter. The second act shows Miranda twelve years older; that is, little Bristow is changed for Bel Menage. We have then the passion of Caliban for Miranda, in its gradations, a fine contrast. Ariel is her guardian, but the monster succeeds in laying him asleep, for a time, and then carries off his virgin mistress to his den. He is punished by his great master for his presumption, by the ministry of demons. Then commences the shipwreck, and the other actual business of Shakespeare's play: the love scenes of Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero's pardon of his brother and the King of Naples, the union of the lovers, and the abjuration of magic by him whom magic has rendered triumphant.

I have run hastily over this, to show the amazing beauty of our Gothic way of fabling, and to demonstrate the peculiar power of Shakespeare over the picturesque of his art. Here he does not

speak a single word; but, observe the expressive power of the action, how easily comprehended, how fanciful in all its parts, how magnificent in its results. Fawcett missed the easy transition afforded by "Claribel at Tunis" between his two acts, for the shipwreck took place after her unfortunate union with the king in Africa.

> "You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise
> By all of us; and the fair soul herself
> Weigh'd between loathness and obedience, at
> Which end the beam should bow."

The parting, after the marriage ceremony, the storm, and the seeming loss of the king's son, Ferdinand, would have been the exact link wanting to connect the two acts. But it was extremely well done, and the little manager gave out his scenery, and machinery, too, on the occasion, and the "Enchanted Island" brought money into the treasury.

Among the novelties this summer, our friend, Arthur Griffenhoofe, of Turnham Green, tried a musical farce, from the French, called the "Gay Deceivers;" it was a failure, but, quite regardless of the shield thrown before Colman, in the song book, Elliston came forward to tell the audience

that "his friendship for the author would end but with his life, and that he had not had justice done him that night." The talking to his audience was, in Elliston, a perfect disease. I hope he has left it off.

But why talk we of midges like these, when the young eagle of the stage had reared his eyry in the North, and Mr. Jackson, of Edinburgh, written a pamphlet to announce the prodigy, William Henry West Betty, the young Roscius? We shall shortly have to exhibit him in town, and, therefore, will not detain our readers to listen to anything of his Young Norval but its effect upon the author of the play. Home, it appears, by Jackson's pamphlet, had been placed in his old station, at the wing, by the complaisance of the manager. The vain old bard pronounced the boy, Betty, the genuine hero he had created, and, at length, quite in ecstasy with the applause of the house, he suddenly quitted his seat, rushed on the stage, made his way to the lamps, and there he stood, bowing his acknowledgments for the triumph of his play. We may conceive the effect of such an appearance upon an audience, every man, woman, or child of which knew the author's person; considering too, as we must, the honour

of all Scotland engaged in the only tragedy of their own growth, transplanted, originally, a slip from their own "Childe Morris," and written by their own countryman, Johnny Home. What could be added to their delight but the realisation of their hope that the young actor might himself be nearly or remotely connected with the land of cakes, for "whence, indeed, could sic a clever fellow come fra but Scotland?" But, at the time I am writing, they have, indeed, a genius to be proud of. Edinburgh has been styled the modern Athens, but I shall let "Rome" remain in the following quotation, which fairly applies to him:

> "Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus, and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs, and peep about,
> To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
> When went there by an age, since the great flood,
> But it was fam'd with more than with one man?"

But, if I have leave to admire my fill at the genius of this great man, I will take the liberty to censure the mere employments of his industry. Why is all literature to be rewritten and cast in a new mould, of English, too, by no means the purest, simply for the prevalence of a name foot-

hot; or, if he likes it better, in the language of the poetical bishop, his countryman, fute-hate?[1]

I see, too, that many of such publications teem with blunders of haste and negligence: we have often rubble, instead of sound masonry, covered over, like the houses of the regent among us, with the uniform white plaster, which has become indispensable. There are other pens for miserable abridgments and children's stories, and the *rifacimento* of such lives, as the long research of such a man as Malone may have enabled him to compile. Nor is it sufficient on such occasions to acknowledge obligation. The real illustrator is defrauded of his just place; it is his life of the poet that should precede the edition of his works, and not a flourish of the mere translator, who assumes the profit without the pains, and at best writes a voyage of discovery from the navigator's journal. I would hang no weights upon the wings of genius; no, far from it. Let it "fly at infinite," and welcome, but let it use its wings, and not, fettering their noble use, crawl, unaided by them, upon the earth with the mere spirit of a trader, to monopolise and grow wealthy. I expect to

[1] "Wyth sic wourdis scho ansueris him fute-hate."
— *Douglas*, b. xii. p. 443.

hear from a hundred tongues the obvious remark upon this freedom, which half accuses it of enmity: "A friendly eye could never see such faults." To this the same poet shall furnish an answer:

> "A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
> As huge as high Olympus."

In the meantime, lest the original standard works should be bought up, and the substitutes be everywhere obtruded in their stead, I should recommend the steady progress of reprinting our great authors, with unceasing vigilance as to their correctness. Divest them of insinuating comments that swell the book and interrupt its perusal by impertinence. From some late specimens I begin to hope that the race of the Didots is not extinct, nor native to France alone. It was on the 10th of July, 1804, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, that François Ambroise Didot died at Paris, and his art was dear to him in death itself. Five times did that perfect printer read over and correct the sheets of the stereotype "Montaigne," published by his sons. From four o'clock in the morning he laboured, during the last year of his life, at this favourite work. He was collecting for it an alphabetical index, and

his materials were copious beyond belief. Such should be our works and such the editions of them in a country which should be as proud of its literature as its arms.

Elliston had grown so popular at Colman's, that he was obliged to take his benefit this season at the Opera House, and, had every visitor paid, he must have got a thousand pounds by the night; but the public took the theatre by storm, and burst through the bars of the pit entrance, sweeping away all checks and their takers. The pressure in the pit amounted to suffocation; the active, among the men, climbed into the boxes, and would not be removed. Those who had taken places in them were to be accommodated somewhere, and the stage offered its ancient area, with a lane of entrance and exit for the performers. All this was, in truth, delightful to everybody but Elliston; for, who now cared a straw for "Pizarro," or "Love Laughs at Locksmiths?" His taste for addressing the people was now in high exercise. He stated to them the loss he must sustain, if the terms of admission were not complied with, and, trusting to their honour, he sent his play-wardens among them with pewter plates, to collect the unpaid dues, and something

was recovered. For those who had given notes, and got no change, a slower redress at the treasury was pointed out.

When the curtain drew up, another audience, in files ten deep, presented itself to the comfortable seated in front, and a loud cry of "Off, off!" violated the great rule of conduct. On again came our busy friend, with his heart in his hand, full of gratitude and tact, and as Madame Banti, a foreigner, had, by the spontaneous goodness of the public, been permitted to stow her friends upon the stage, he trusted that the same indulgence would be extended to a Briton. Now who could withstand such an appeal? I think he got about £600, and might have lost something like £400. Honour, we may remember, on high authority, to be but a "trim reckoning."

The Drury Lane season, 1804–05, commenced on the 15th of September, and was opened by Mrs. Jordan herself in the Widow Cheerly — some minutes elapsed in the cheering given to this great favourite. Mathews now became a regular actor at Drury, and so did Elliston himself; thus the scheme of an independent company at Colman's was entirely out of the question. Indeed, on his last night, some of his performers

left him in the lurch, and were securing their winter quarters. But in the way of novelty, the stage for many years had seen nothing equal to the fair candidate of the 8th of October, Miss Duncan, in the character of Lady Teazle. The elegance of her person and manners, the strength and distinctness of her utterance, her spirit and perfect self-possession, showed her to be, what indeed it was expected she would prove, the representative of Miss Farren, with a wider range, and inferior only in beauty and fashion. She was a prodigious acquisition, and a very steady servant of the public, for more than twenty years. A Mr. Lathom, who I think supplied the Minerva of Leadenhall Street with some romances of terrible interest, failed at Drury Lane in a musical entertainment called the "Dash." It was a mass of plagiarism, in which the author showed more taste than power — for the originals of his characters were all popular. He was stripped of his borrowed plumes with so much skill, that criticism seemed to bear the search-warrant to discover all the stolen feathers, at the suit of the parent birds.

The feathers which have just fallen from my old quill, by that amazing association which regulates memory itself, suggest to me a revival of

poetical compliment, such as two hundred years ago used to salute our James the First and his queen on any royal progress among his subjects. Though I believe the "common stagers" then were not employed upon such occasions. It was on the 29th of September, the birthday of the late Queen of Würtemberg. A fête was given at Weymouth in honour of it, on board the royal yacht, and on the arrival of their Majesties and the princesses, from a group of messmates burst forward our friend Elliston, in the character of a sailor, and addressed the king in a good forty lines of rhyme passably strung together. The address told his Majesty how ill he had been, and what his people felt at his recovery; the transition was natural to the superior feelings of his daughter:

> "'Oh, may he live,' she cries, with mingled tears,
> 'Longer than I have time to tell his years.'"

All was proceeding thus in the tenderest manner imaginable, when the sailor's wife, impatient to be talking, interrupts him with the happy recollection of the day being that of St. Michael, when everybody eats a goose that can get one, and learns its Latin appellation of brandy. Miss De-

camp was entrusted with this seasonable lady, and read her natural history to their Majesties, the princesses, and their suite.

> "When cackling animals, by instinct, feel
> A sort of tremor through the bosom steal;
> And every year, on this auspicious day,
> Our vows to him with grateful teeth we pay."

We have heard, 'tis true, of the "royal game" of goose; but in the way of compliment the present allusion on a birthday is supremely happy. I should be afraid to ask the name of the author of such a merry-thought. The rest laughed at the old morality in cross-stitch, and the modest pillion, and Aunt Deborah's Joseph, and, as is usual, to the very teeth of the royal party, blazoned their virtues and graces.

On the 20th of November Mrs. Jordan obtained another popular farce to add to her stock, called "Matrimony," a French piece adapted to our theatre by Kenney. It is a very amusing trifle, by which a fickle couple, disgusted to separation while at liberty, are by confinement brought to love nothing so well as union. Mrs. Jordan now had the sprightly vein of Elliston to play up to her, and the piece was a decided hit.

I cannot but consider Mrs. Jordan singularly fortunate as an actress. From the commencement of her career to its close, she never experienced professional mortification. Her pre-eminence was at every stage cordially acknowledged, and her popularity little affected even by the circumstances of her private history. She had not, like Mrs. Siddons, the awkward decorum to practise among her fashionable friends, of not questioning their judgment, while she witnessed their frenzy — of not at least scorning their facility with a placid brow, and beholding all her triumphs, in an art studied with so much care, exceeded by the enthusiasm for a boy of thirteen, who was everywhere preferred to all living actors, and for whom age was only demanded, to place him even above our Roscius himself. The situation of Kemble was yet more disagreeable. The boy had chased him from his own stage. All his studies of Shakespeare, the maturity of his judgment, the grandeur of his person and countenance, were set at nought by judges whom he could not disregard, the first of orators, the greatest of men of all parties and of all ages, and the fair echoes, or leaders of their opinion (as it might chance), devoting themselves to the adoration and the eleva-

tion of this darling idol, who seems to have entirely unwitted the whole mind of these kingdoms. They besieged his doors all day, and would have been the guardians of his nightly slumbers as they were of his morning drives. I should wish to preserve some evidences of the public frenzy and then fairly estimate the ground of it all; which on this "removed ground," I at least fancy myself able to do. In the meantime I must take leave of Mrs. Jordan, as then everybody else did, and to the end of my chapter commemorate the young Roscius, fated never to be an old one.

Covent Garden Theatre was first honoured with his appearance on the 1st of December, 1804, and, as early as one o'clock, the people began to pour into the Piazzas and Bow Street, either to enter the theatre, or see those that did, or attempted to do it. The interest made to obtain places (always great in this country) had been excessive on the present occasion. James Brandon, one of the kindest men in the world, had been everybody's "dear Mr. Brandon" ever since the boy's announcement, but, I believe, he was singularly "clear in his great office," as he certainly was indefatigable. He was housekeeper, as well as keeper of the box book, and the care of the house,

at all times, was his special duty. On the present occasion he required, internally, a numerous body of peace officers, and externally, a strong detachment of the guards. The latter were of the most vital service; for when the passages were all choked up, the house filled, and thousands still pressing toward the avenues, the shrieks of those who had vainly attempted to go forward, and now as vainly tried to get back, were so terrific, that while they had breath to call out, they summoned the soldiers to save them: and only soldiers could have done it. They soon divided the ins from the outs, by forming in front, and then allowed of exits, but no more entrances; by which measure, the almost exhausted at length secured a retreat, and the light-fingered gentry, now heavily laden, made their exit along with them, complaining dreadfully of the pressure. We must now survey the inside.

The two galleries were crammed in a few minutes. The pit, with its narrow pay places, took some time, and now the young athletes showed their science; for they paid the box admission, and then made their way from the fronts of the boxes into the pit, so that its visitors through the straight and narrow gates found very little space to occupy. This plan of "springing o'er the fence

at once into the fold" was so generally conceived, that it was numerously adopted, and at last, when the pit would, literally, no longer afford standing-room, unless upon the heads of its inhabitants, the intruders into the boxes determined to keep the places secured for others, and resist all the expected efforts to dislodge them. When, therefore, the parties, applauding their own foresight, left their carriages to occupy the places they had secured, they found them already gone, and called upon the box-keeper to turn out the invaders. This was an utter impossibility. Then manhood, true manhood, went to work, and blows were interchanged, as well as cards. The police officers now attempted to clear them; but they were beaten back by the tenants at will, who would take no warning to quit, and defied all ejectment. At length their generosity made room in the front for some few ladies, who were determined upon the matter, and, not being permitted to carry their male friends with them, sat with strangers, rather than miss the opportunity of seeing the prodigy. The ventilators were all at work, but the heat was so extreme, that even men, seemingly lifeless, were lifted up from the pit, and dragged through the boxes into their lobbies, which had windows. The

stage-curtain was raised about a foot, and a current of air passed that way into the pit. The noise all this time equalled the heat. At length C. Kemble came on to speak an address, which Mr. Taylor had composed, in such very modest language, that it was well for him it could not be heard; for I think he only talked of "Pallas starting from the brain of Jove." I cannot but suppose he would have been voted a partisan of the house of Kemble, and been sentenced, as B. Jonson was, on another occasion, to infamy, for his "sparing and invidious commendation."

The play was "Barbarossa," a tragedy written by Doctor Brown; and Garrick had played Selim, a youth of twenty, in the fortieth year of his age. The young Roscius had just completed his thirteenth year, the exact age when the Selim of the play lost his father. Nothing, therefore, could be less exceptionable than the choice of début. Betty was even tall of his age, and his voice, though unformed, had the "manly crack." In the first act Selim does not appear; but Mr. Hargrave and Mr. Murray did, or thought they did, for the spectators thought nothing about them, though they represented Barbarossa and Othman, and the latter told the boy's age, and other things that concerned

the interest. At length, to the great delight of the house, the curtain dropped upon the first act. In the second the boy was to appear.

Mrs. Litchfield, who acted Zaphira, his mother, was an actress of great energy, and had a very powerful and well-toned voice. The play, too, fortunately, supplied her with a curse upon Barbarossa, the enemy of the boy, and who had assumed the name of king, and intended to demand an interview with her. The tirade she utters on this assumption of regality by the tyrant is this:

"O title, vilely purchas'd by the blood
Of innocence; by treachery and murder.
May Heaven, incens'd, pour down its vengeance on him;
Blast all his joys, and turn them into horror;
Till frenzy rise, and bid him curse the hour
That gave his crimes their birth."

She delivered this admirably, for she had a soul; the spectators were turned by her into audience — they applied the lines to Buonaparte, and the most vehement applause was given to the spirited lady before them. The other female in the piece was Mrs. H. Siddons (Murray's daughter), who acted Irene.

At length, dressed as a slave, in white linen pantaloons, a short, close russet jacket trimmed

with sable, and a turban hat or cap, at the command of the tyrant on came the desire of all eyes, Master William Henry West Betty. With the sagacity of an old stager I walked quietly into the house at the end of the first act, made my way into the lobby of the first circle, planted myself at the back of one of the boxes outside, and saw him make his bow, and never stirred till the curtain fell at the end of the play. I had a good glass, and saw him perfectly. He was a fair, pleasing youth, well formed, and remarkably graceful. The first thing that struck me was that it was passion for the profession that made him an actor; he was doing what he loved to do, and put his whole force into it. The next thing I felt was that he had amazing docility, and great aptitude at catching what he was taught — he could convey passions which he had never felt nor seen in operation but upon the stage. Grace, energy, fire, vehemence were his own — the understanding was of a maturer brain. He seemed, however, to think all he said, and, had he been taught to pronounce with accuracy, there was nothing beyond his obvious requisites for the profession.

All boys have nearly the same defects in dec-

lamation; they either hoot out their words or mouth them; they do not clear off their syllables, they hang and drawl. They endeavour to move you by a monotonous, heavy cadence, such as even great actresses moan out when they do not choose to think while they speak, — no rare occurrence; but they get tired of repetition, are frequently unwell, and the substitute passes where the ears are sufficiently long.

Had Betty died at this time he would exactly have resembled the character given by Ben Jonson of Salathiel Pavy, one of the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, of whom the laureate thus writes:

"Weep with me all you that read
This little story:
And know for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As Heav'n and Nature seem'd to strive
Which own'd the creature.
Years he number'd scarce thirteen
When fates turn'd cruel,
Yet three fill'd zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel."

But he is before me, and I therefore proceed. Embarrassment Betty did not seem to have the

slightest, nor to think of his audience. He turned himself like a veteran to his work; his eye never wandered from the true mark, and, though not dark, it was quick and meaning. He did not wring his features into distortion at any time to look impressive, nor roll his eye, as is the practice, to imply subtlety. There was no trick about him. The first thunder that followed the flash of his kindled fancy was at his delivery of this passage, and he spoke it perfectly. It is his feigned assassination of himself:

"While night drew on, we leap'd upon our prey;
Full at his heart brave Omar aim'd the poniard,
Which Selim shunning, wrench'd it from his hand,
Then plung'd it in his breast; — I hasted on,
Too late to save, yet I reveng'd my friend —
My thirsty dagger, with repeated blows,
Search'd every artery — they fell together,
Gasping in folds of mortal enmity,
And thus in frowns expir'd."

All this, it is true, was trimmed and tuned to the fine ear of Garrick. But Betty waited its effect with his eye, as he described the action, like a master. The trïal of Othman's principles and the ultimate communication that Selim was yet alive — the lowered tone of voice, the prying caution lest he should be overheard, were all as

finished efforts as if such a man as my friend Waldron, with all his impresssions of Garrick as vivid as they were at first, had shown the youth the manner in which the mighty master moved himself through all the business of the scene. The part of Selim is kept rising judiciously to the close of the act, and he left his audience perfectly transfixed in admiration and astonishment.

The third act showed the mere boy. Irene, young and beautiful, excited nothing consonant in him. He was a stranger to the passion of love, and time had not yet matured him into the expression of its language. All his tenderness was devoted to his mother. Nature could speak in him as a son, it seemed, though not as a lover. The message to Zaphira, which Achmet delivers to her from her son, whom she supposes at a distance, is well written on the model of Addison:

> "Bid her remember that the ways of Heaven,
> Tho' dark, are just; that oft some guardian pow'r
> Attends unseen to save the innocent!
> But if high Heaven decrees our fall! oh! bid her
> Firmly to wait the stroke, prepar'd alike
> To live and die. — And then he wept, as I do."

Nothing can be prettier than this address of Selim in the last line. But the soliloquy with

which the act ends, and, young as the speaker then looked, the destruction of the tyrant there menaced, was the prime favourite. His energy was so striking as to keep it from ridiculous bravado. The difficulty vanished before him. The fourth act had some fine bursts. The fifth has little or nothing for the actor. Doctor Brown, as a dramatic poet, could do nothing but what had been done before. He had not even the talent of new combination in a slight degree. His play, in fact, is "Merope," new-named.

Some of the faults of this singular youth have been hinted already. The most decided flatterer could not talk down the most obvious one; it proceeded from a want that can only be corrected by advanced, perhaps begun education. He did not syllabicate; his notion of a word was often caught from vulgar speakers, and Selim, in his utterance, was sometimes Cœlum. He did not aspirate where he should — probably did not know that others do it. I saw little beyond Selim in any of his other characters, — there was no original conception of the part; it was the prompter's tradition of great men executed by a surprising boy.

At Covent Garden he also acted Young Norval, another Selim, and Frederick, in "Lovers' Vows."

CHAPTER VII.

The Young Roscius Acts Norval to Great Houses — The Nightly Average — The Receipts of His Twenty-eight Nights at Drury — Talk of Erecting Statues — Opie and Northcote Paint Whole-lengths — Duke of Clarence Accepts the Dedication of Northcote's Picture — Medical Men Usually Wild about the Stage — The Professional Policy — One Physician Supremely Ridiculous — Betty Taken to the "Adelphi" — A Westminster Dormitory — Introduced to the Archbishop of York — Probable Advice from Markham — Old Actors Affect to Admire the Boy, Because They Hated Kemble — Mrs. Litchfield Strikes a Blow for Her Own Benefit — How It Benefited Others — Kemble Appears in "Othello" — The Town Begins to Awake — "Richard the Third" Acted by the Little Duke of York — The Boy for the First Time Hissed — Siddons, after Long Absence, Returns — Kemble Now Presumes to Act "Macbeth" — Miss Mudie — The Fund Applies to Betty to Act a Night for His Poor Brethren — Aid Refused — A Peep at Coventry in Passion Week — Hough, the Prompter, *versus* Betty — Pensioned Off at Last to Keep Him Quiet — Mrs. Jordan Acts for Macklin's Widow at Covent Garden — The Riot at the Opera House as to Sunday — The Mischief Done by the Clerical Interference.

THE triumph of tragedy now was like that of "Romeo and Juliet" in the days of Garrick. The young Roscius was the support of both the patent theatres. Tancred, and Romeo, and Hamlet were the additions to his

list of parts. But of all his performances Young Norval was the decided favourite. Out of twenty-eight nights at Drury Lane Theatre, between December and April, he performed Young Norval eleven times, and the receipts to "Douglas" amounted to £7,133 13*s.* 6*d.*, or a nightly average of £648 10*s.* 4*d.* Why was not poor Home present to rush again from the wing, and say, "This is my work?" The total of the twenty-eight nights at Drury was £17,210 11*s.*, an average of £614 13*s.* 3*d.* only, which shows the transcendency of the Grampian hero. The committee paid the Duke of Bedford at once £3,155 15*s.* 2*d.* due to him for rent. I have not the receipts of Covent Garden House for the same number of nights, and it might not hold quite so much as the Drury Apollo; but the result must be something near in total, and thus, probably, in fifty-six nights, a youth of thirteen drew £34,000 into a theatre to see him act the principal characters in tragedy, and snatch, at all events, one house from impending ruin.

The talk now ran of erecting statues to the phenomenon. Opie painted him as Young Norval, Northcote as having drawn inspiration from the tomb of Shakespeare. The latter was engraved

and dedicated by Mr. Betty to H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence, as the royal patron of the boy. I have often smiled at the eagerness with which our men of medical science espouse the interests of players. Of all men, they have the least disposable time for theatres. Perhaps they find their common practice move more cheerily if they have anything to communicate as to the popular idol, and, therefore, in fact, make others pay for their friendly attendance upon the stage. One worthy and very skilful man busied himself extremely in the boy's welfare. As he was himself a scholar, he did not attempt to deny the deficiencies in his education; but he had a panacea here, which was very amusing. "Let them," said he, "buy the boy a first folio of Shakespeare, and get a clergyman to teach him Greek." He seemed to forget that prodigy is enhanced by the seeming inadequacy of means to produce the effect. Some of the founders, alike of religions and kingdoms, have been ignorant men. When a youth from Eton or Harrow speaks Latin elegantly, where is the wonder, when he studied under Sumner or Parr?

What the first folio of Shakespeare was to do for Master Betty, perhaps the learned prescriber

never asked himself. It contains one piece of valuable information: that the mighty genius, whose works it presents in their original spelling, had "small Latin, and less Greek;" and it will be difficult to show that more learning is required for the delivery of a play than its composition. So that the first half of the prescription dismissed the second; and the second, if he had ever seen the book mentioned, would certainly have dismissed the first. The playhouse copy is quite sufficient for the actor, who addresses only a mixed auditory. Correct study of Shakespeare's text belongs to those who are either deep in the mysteries of philosophical grammar, or are preparing editions of the poet's works. The last shelter for pedantry should be the stage. An actor need not trouble himself with digging up Saxon roots to justify what is obscure. His object is to be understood without difficulty, and to speak his mother tongue sensibly and articulately, leaning in his pronunciation to the refined, rather than the vulgar mode. I suppose as a preliminary to his Greek studies, Master Betty, on the 12th of December, was taken to the "Adelphi;" I do not mean in the Strand, but to the dormitory of Westminster, to see the comedy by Terence, so called,

acted in Latin by the Westminster boys. They sported him as a lion, in the seat of honour, and he was introduced that evening to the venerable Archbishop of York, Markham, who might caution him, perhaps, from catching bad habits of either author or actors.

The success of Betty was quite unparalleled. At first he had fifty pounds per night; but this ceased with his third performance, and he had afterward one hundred pounds every single night. So that, with his provincial engagements and benefits, with large presents, his first year must have made his fortune. And it was happy for him that it did so, for the wane, as Cowper expresses himself, was near at hand. The town could not be kept at fever heat long. To expose the mystery to daylight was to show natural causes producing natural effects. Hough, the prompter of the Belfast theatre, had given the boy lessons in his art. He brought with the graces of youth an ardent love of acting — enthusiastic himself, he kindled enthusiasm around him. Old actors were astonished at his acquirements, and all who had been displaced by Kemble affected to patronise the youth, who, by the weapons of childhood, had beaten down the giant whom they

hated. Smith distinguished himself by presents and verses, "conceits more rich in matter than in words." He always undervalued Kemble, and for this object eternally talked of the inimitable Mr. Garrick.

It has been already said that Mrs. Litchfield was honoured by acting with Betty for his benefit, or that of the house, but it could not be expected that he should act for hers. In this situation, what was to be done? What attraction could she contrive for her bill? Her husband was a gentleman distinguished as a critic, a man of letters, and clear and calm judgment; he thought the time had arrived to show the town how much perfect merit they were neglecting, and to reclaim their attention to manhood, at least in their highest amusement. Mrs. Litchfield accordingly took an opportunity of asking Mr. Kemble whether he would act Othello for her benefit, on the 22d of May, 1805? His answer was, "Certainly, if you wish it — but I feel myself bound to tell you, that I think you have made a weak choice." She expressed herself obliged by his readiness, and determined to bring her notion to the test. Her night was well attended, Kemble acted the Moor in his most perfect style, Cooke was very masterly in

Iago, C. Kemble made Cassio a prominent part, Mrs. H. Siddons was a most lovely Desdemona, and she herself was the Emilia. Mr. Heathcote sat in the stage-box, and the boy Betty was in the front of it, and I have not the smallest doubt, was as much delighted as any person in the theatre. I firmly believe, the actress might compliment herself justly with having "done the deed." She had certainly spoken intelligibly her own sense, in the language of Shakespeare, to the distempered town:

"In thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness! Answer my life, my judgment!
See better Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye."

However, such honour must not unaccompanied invest her only. The town had now begun to set limits to the aspiring blood of our hero, who was persuaded, on his second benefit at Drury this season, to play King Richard the Third. This was, in fact, too laughable. It was the little prating York ridiculing his uncle. He on this occasion, for the first time in his career, heard the hisses of his adorers.

At his first benefit, "Hamlet," he dexterously

omitted the indignant poet's allusion to the usurpation of children like himself, who had chased the "tragedians of the city" from their stations:

> "*Ham.* Do the boys carry it away?
> *Ros.* Ay, that they do, my lord."

These two benefits produced Betty £2,500.

Mrs. Siddons, after a long and dangerous illness, returned to the stage, on the 25th of April, in Lady Macbeth; but Mr. Kemble played Macbeth on the occasion, to the very great astonishment no doubt of the great statesmen, and physicians, and lawyers, and artists, and men of letters, who had disgraced themselves by preposterous adulation of a clever boy.

Drury Lane seems to have followed up this blow, for on the 31st of the same month they brought out Miss Mudie, within a year as old as Master Betty, in the character of the "Spoil'd Child." Mrs. Jordan, however, was not disturbed by this "Little Pickle." In the meantime, the avarice of young Betty's father was doing everything to destroy his son. The fund for decayed actors of Drury Lane Theatre was at this time in no flourishing state. Moody, retired at Barnes Terrace, wrote the following letter for the com-

mittee to Mr. Betty, *ad captandum vulgus;* but he would not be caught:

"'Teach me to feel another's woe.' — *Pope.*

"We, undersigned, the master, trustees, and committee for managing the fund raised by that great master of his art, David Garrick, Esq., finding at this time our finances so low, have been obliged to pare down the income of our poor claimants by a severe and heavy poundage, and unless your son stands forth for us with his transcendent abilities for one night, we shall be poor indeed. We have chosen you, sir, our advocate to him for this liberal deed of benevolence to be extended to his aged distressed brethren, which, joined to his present popularity, will consecrate his name to time's end.

"With great respect, etc., it was signed by

"Mr. Secretary Maddocks.

"*T. R., Drury Lane, March,* 1805."

In six weeks' time, says honest, indignant Moody, the committee had an answer in the negative. To such members of the profession, male or female (for I would avoid personality), as refrain from aiding what they never mean to burden, I

can only say, that Mr. Garrick was not of their mind, for he endowed as well as founded, and I beg leave to warn them, that they cannot calculate, with their short-sighted pride and apathy, the frightful reverses of human condition. The aristocracy of rank and wealth among us are now the patrons of these two grateful and graceful funds.

The time of the youth undoubtedly was precious; and the old proverb was not lost upon the father of Betty. Some lingering recollections of former piety had kept the Passion week in London without plays. But what of that? The hay was to be made, and the country, to be sure, was the natural place for it. Mr. Betty, therefore, engaged his son to act at Coventry on the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th of April, Norval, Frederick, Achmet, and Hamlet. But the spirit of Peeping Tom had whispered this discovery of his to the bishop of the diocese, and on the 1st of April, this grasping insult was averted by a command to the manager to close his theatre. Such was the *auri sacra fames*, that slighted every other sacred thing.

But the same cause was very near producing a mischievous effect indeed. The reader may not quite have forgotten the ladder of young ambition, and George Cooke's use of it. What I now allude

to is the treatment of old Hough the prompter, the almost paternal instructor of young Betty for a considerable time. This Mentor of his Telemachus Mr. Betty turned off in his narrowness, without the slightest provision whatever. The old gentleman, on this hint to speak, advertised as preparing for the press, aye, and speedily to be published:

"HOUGH *versus* BETTY.

"An appeal to the judgment and candour of an impartial British public. By William Hough, late dramatic tutor to the young Roscius. In which will be introduced a curious and truly original correspondence, previous and subsequent to Master Betty's first appearance on the stage; with notes, theatrical, analytical, and explanatory."

"Blow, blow, thou winter's wind;
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude."
— *Shakespeare*, *As You Like It.*

An annuity of fifty guineas for life was settled on the honest prompter, who now having got his cue, rang down the curtain upon the meditated exposure, and was contented to —

"Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale."

My ever kind Mrs. Jordan, on the 17th June, 1805, gave her talents, along with those of Kemble and Cooke, in the "Wonder" and "Love à la Mode," for the benefit of poor Macklin's widow. I should think there might be £300 for her.

On the 15th of June occurred the memorable riot at the Opera House, in pursuance of ecclesiastical order to close at twelve o'clock on the night preceding the Lord's Day. By omitting one whole act of the ballet, the curtain fell about half-past eleven. Half an hour's amusement was thus cut away from the public, by miscalculation of time. All the fine instruments in the orchestra were demolished, and the music torn and scattered about. The foot-lamps were at one fell swoop destroyed upon the stage. Some of the scenery was cut to pieces, and the slight chairs in the boxes, disjointed, formed excellent missiles to throw at the distant chandeliers. Kelly told the rioters that he but obeyed the orders received from Bow Street, at the instance of the Bishop of London. On this they ordered the prelate to be sent for, that he might answer for himself, and confront Mr. Goold, the proprietor, who was out of town.

Thus, instead of a profanation, if it be one, of

about ten minutes upon the stage (for the entire act omitted of the ballet would not have taken above forty minutes), a horrible riot was in progress for two hours of what the bishop chose to consider as Sunday. The ladies were borne away in fits to their carriages — property was destroyed to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds — fighting and swearing banished among the young men of fashion everything gentlemanly as well as Christian among us, and all this because the Bishop of London had chosen to regulate the petticoats of the dancers and the drop curtain before them. Truly a most excellent mode of "keeping holy the Sabbath day."

On the Tuesday following all was profound peace and satisfaction. Mr. Goold printed an appeal to the liberal public, which told only what Kelly had stated from the stage before, that the objectionable measure had been ventured, that the stage might comply with the mandate of the police regulated by the Church. Surely, surely, if reason could be heard upon such a subject, the nights might be left out of the question, and the day of work and the day of rest be bounded alike by the rising and the setting sun. Particularly by the reformed clergy, who, doubtless for reasons which

regard more than their own ease, perform on Sunday both the morning and the evening service always between those intervals, namely, eleven o'clock, A. M., and four P. M. But the Church should take no particular cognisance of either play or opera-houses, nor move at all in regulation of a civil nature, but upon a convocation solemnly held, and a general conviction that their Palladium was endangered by any practice among society that infringed upon the canons. But such trifling as the present was mischievous. If really in earnest, why not follow home the visitors of such places of amusement? Why not attack the midnight orgies of the reveller and the gambler; and boldly ring out a curfew at twelve upon all unhallowed fires that only illumine depravity? "Oh, this we dare not do!" Well, I know it; and therefore do not show your weakness, by the exertion only of slight power; and what the poet figures by "spurning enviously at straws."

The above interference of authority to disturb the peace, may candidly be accompanied by one to preserve it. At the Warwick assizes, in April, 1805, the judges laid it down as law, that "the managers or proprietors of a theatre may direct the servants of the house to remove any person or

persons that have got possession of places against the rules of the theatre; and if an assault be committed by such removal, his or their conduct is by law justified." The learned judge here did not consider the difficulty of executing the direction; and that between the said servants and the possessors against rule, the assault and battery might be divided.

This summer saw the sale and dispersion of that vast collection of pictures, which once inhabited the Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall. Mr. Christie's hammer decided the lots as they fell to different classes of purchasers. All novelty, to be sure, had long been taken out of the pictures; and the proprietors of the gallery found that there was indeed a difference between buying and selling. The only good prices were given for Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Puck," "Cardinal Beaufort," and "Macbeth," for Smirke's "Seven Ages," and Northcote's "Tomb of the Capulets." His other pictures did not much turn a hundred guineas each. Mr. West's "King Lear in the Storm," the finest composition of them all, sold for no more than £215 5*s*., and was bought for Mr. Fulton, of Philadelphia, a countryman of the artist's.

I feel myself becoming like "goodman delver,"

in "Hamlet," a recorder of the dead, and my place among the living somewhat coloured by my intimacy with the departed. I have now to attend to his grave, in St. Paul's churchyard, the remains of that very excellent comedian, Suett, who defrauded life of at least twenty years' innocent mirth, by expiring at the age of forty-seven. He had received the musical education of a chorister, and the queen's boys and some musical friends were ready to sing a requiem over the body. At first I thought the impediment might have proceeded from the recollection that poor Suett had been a player.

> "We should profane the service of the dead
> To sing sage requiem, and such rest to [him]
> As to peace-parted souls."
>
> — *1st Fol.* 1623, p. 258.

But the religious objection was only calculated for the meridian of Paris; one of infinitely greater moment operated in the cemetery of St. Paul. It was, that the tribute-money for such a license amounted to something like thirty-eight sterling pounds, and the money was of some consequence to his family. He was interred on the 15th of July, 1805, his two sons, and four private friends, following the body.

The Haymarket season had some features of high comedy: Elliston's addresses; "An Army of Tailors," for Dowton's benefit, to oppose the performance of a piece, that goes by their name, and, erroneously, by Foote's. No modern Xenophon has written the "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" that were posted in the Haymarket on this occasion. Graham, the magistrate, took the lead against them, and, by the assistance of the guards, and some "special officers of might," about twenty were secured till they could procure bail. There is some secret in the laugh which attends the very allusion to a tailor; and I leave the earliest instance of it now to the reflection of my readers — the earliest, I mean, that occurs to me. It is recorded by that merry hobgoblin Puck himself.

"The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stoole mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, downe topples she,
And tailour cries, and falls into a coffe;
And then the whole quire hold their hips, and loffe,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and sweare
A merrier houre was never wasted there."

— *1st Fol.* 1623, p. 148.

The old lady toppling down from her no seat was, confessedly, a diverting incident; but when,

finding herself in the true position, she cries out "Tailor!" it becomes irresistible; the whole assembly are convulsed with laughter, and hold their hips lest they should burst in the indulgence of their spleens.

But what talk we of tailors when such a man as Liston is just arrived from Newcastle, and on the 18th of June is to appear in John Lump? On that night he commenced a reign, the longest and the most prosperous among the sons of humour. He is the only comic actor whose salary has passed that of every tragedian, and, at the time I am writing, he can secure his terms, whatever he may choose to demand. I cannot define his power, and therefore will not attempt it. He must be seen to be comprehended. Other actors labour to be comic. I see nothing like labour or system in Liston. In his person he is stately, and even grave in his expression, nervous and rather remote from popular habits. A large fortune has rewarded this great benefactor of his species, and, as an antidote, I would pit him singly against all the conventicles of gloom and wretchedness in the kingdom. I do not think that his style mixes well; he does not concur in any general effect — he is alone as well when with others on the scene

as when he enters to soliloquise, or, rather, enjoy himself with the audience. He could deliver artful composition correctly if he chose to do so, but either for the author's sake or his own he is best, *ad libitum*, confined only by the business of the play.

The winter of 1805–06 was the triumph of the veterans of the stage. "These violent delights have violent ends," is a maxim of great moral excellence; it teaches the spoiled children of the world to be humble in their exaltation, that their fall may come without insult. Kemble had to reckon with the public for their absurdity, and, accordingly, got up the "Revenge" with great care. Zanga is peculiarly suited to the grandeur of his deportment, and, in his sullen and vindictive rumination and final vengeance, his powers of imagination bore him higher, far higher than his physical strength. But during so sublime an effort it was impossible not to feel ashamed that such a man should have been neglected and disparaged for a mere parrot, however well taught.

The next effort was to show how much could be done by the consummate artist with even scanty materials. Kemble left with his friend Cooke the tyrant Gloucester, but, upon the re-

vival of "Jane Shore," performed the Protector of Rowe's imitation, which used to be played so amiably by my friend James Aickin. I cannot express the surprise of the audience when, with an energy that really withered everybody near him, he rushed upon the council table and displayed his arm, "shrunk like a foul abortion," and charged it to the sorcery of Edward's wife, with whom he coupled poor Shore, in order to excite her protector, his intended victim, Hastings, performed by his brother Charles. Mrs. Siddons was the Shore, Mrs. Litchfield Alicia.

Between December and February the audiences of Master Betty had greatly fluctuated, — his highest receipt was £550, his lowest was £227 15*s.*, — a just punishment for his presumption in playing Zanga at all after Kemble. The average of the second season for twenty nights was no more than £341 12*s.* 9*d.* per night, out of which he was to be paid a hundred guineas. The "professing Syrens" had made his benefit a thing of £1,200 at first (which sum the managers had insured to him); it was no more now than £301 18*s.*, and Mrs. Jordan, who had been twenty years before them, had £309 17*s.* 6*d.* in her house. One is reminded of the beautiful figure of Prospero :

"The charme dissolves apace,
And as the morning steales upon the night,
(Melting the darknesse), so their rising sences
Begin to chace the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their cleerer reason."

— *Shakespeare*, 1st fol. p. 16.

But on the 3d of November, 1806, Kemble, by his "crowning mercy," as Cromwell used to call his great victory, put all delusion to flight, and took Coriolanus for his surname, perhaps for ever.

Drury Lane was now again sinking under its great rival. The pantomime is usually a trial of strength, and Covent Garden was at its maximum. The 28th of December, 1806, will be long distinguished as the natal day of "Mother Goose," produced by those "twins of honour" in Yule time, Messrs. Farley and T. Dibdin. Little Simmons performed *Notre révérende Mère* to a turn, and Grimaldi, a genius who is yet unapproached, created the clown. The two Bolognas were the Pantaloon and Harlequin, and the Columbine Miss Searle. There was a portrait of this young lady by Opie, painted for Mr. Heathcote, which showed rather more of her beauty than is usually displayed, yet right modest. In the wreck of his fortunes, I know not what became of it.

The first hit made by Drury was an opera

written by Kenney, called "False Alarms, or My Cousin," brought out on the 12th of January, 1807, and at three and twenty years' distance, I was this morning hailed by my little friend from the gray back of "an arm-gaunt steed," who certainly did not interrupt our conversation by any neighing impatience either amatorial or locomotive. He is still as acute, as pleasant, and inventive as ever, and, though never robust, likely to divert mankind ten years longer at least. The prime attraction of "False Alarms" was Mr. Braham, who acted (as the opera-people call such efforts in a singer) Edgar in the piece, and accompanied himself brilliantly on a grand pianoforte, in the immortal Anacreontic, "Said a Smile to a Tear." Most events have, unhappily, their dark side, and so it happened on the present occasion. The sweet singer of Israel fascinated *tout le monde* by the easy sensibility of this union of the smile to a tear. The first mouth that opened, in every room where singing was permitted, was sure to set off with "Said a Smile to a Tear"—as our Autolycus expresses himself, "No hearing, no feeling, but admiring my sir's song, and the nothing of it." The copyright to Braham must have been a fortune. But the "Chart," from the East In-

dies, is a piece of convulsive humour, and Bannister gave it well.

The piece of Kenney was followed, on the 28th of the month, by a full five-act comedy, called "Assignation," written by Miss Lee, whose "Chapter of Accidents" seemed to announce in her "the nature of a comic volume." Her "Assignation" was punctually attended by the town; but the parties separated, mutually disgusted with each other, and the lady's dramatic reputation suffered on the occasion, though there was no attempt at privacy.

But on the 19th of February, another play, from the pen of the late Mr. Tobin, called the "Curfew," was carried most triumphantly through the ordeal of criticism. It is, as to its action, the "Revenge" of Young, thrown among the Normans and the Danes. Hugh de Tracy, at the head of the Normans, Mr. Barrymore, and Mr. Elliston, Fitzharding the Dane. Miss Duncan, now at the summit, was the baron's daughter, and wore for the nonce the male dress to meet her lover. Tobin's power was the power of poetical style; he was born a subject of Queen Elizabeth, and had lain in a trance till the reign of George the Third. How like to Fletcher's softness was

the following beautiful passage, which Miss Duncan spoke as Florence:

"But with a new delight my bosom throbb'd,
When first you talk'd of Bertram. You observ'd,
'He was a handsome youth,' — I thought so, too.
'A brave one,' — my heart beat with fearful joy.
'Not rich,' you added. — There I heaved a sigh,
And turn'd my head aside. But whilst the tear
Stood on my cheek, you said that 'Fortune's gifts
Were poor, compar'd with Nature's.' Then, my father,
You bade me learn to love him."

Such is his softness; what his energy could be Fitzharding, the Zanga, should tell us:

"What you have made me, still expect to find me —
A man struck from the catalogue of men,
Exil'd from all society — stamp'd, like Cain,
To wander savage and forlorn. — Why, then,
Revenge be still my solitary comfort;
By darkness and by daylight my companion;
My food, my sleep, my study, and my pastime."

These passages were written by him at twenty-eight. Surely a judicial blindness, a fog of vanity and profound conceit, was before the eyes of our theatrical managers, and Wroughton alone could discern the merit of Tobin, because he was the only man who really read his productions, or, read-

ing them, had no interest to suppress them. Nor did opposition to his wishes cease to persecute the author of the "Curfew" in his last moments. He had embarked at Cork for the West Indies, and was driven back by a hurricane. In the midst of the tempest he had retired to his cabin, and to such rest as could be obtained at such a juncture. On the vessel's return to Cork the attendant visited his cot, to inform him of their safety; but he had passed away, and his last breath had but deepened the sigh of the gale that swept the deck above his head. His relations did not reach Cork in time to pay the last honours to his remains. His doom was unvaried disappointment. I would place these four lines, by Gilbert Wakefield, to bestow classical honour at least upon him:

"At tumulum ornabunt surgentes undique flores;
At premet haud ullo pondere gleba sinum.
Hic primis gramen lachrymis Aurora rigabit;
Hic pandent vernæ germina prima rosæ."

Our illustrious Pope shall supply the English on this occasion, indeed, the original of the passage:

"Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow."

But I must turn to spirits of another sort — too bold for rebuff, and conversant with all the arts of securing attention. On the 1st of April Monk Lewis brought out what is impudently styled a grand romantic melodrama. But let us spare the bombast of a playbill, when every coxcomb, secondary in office, sounds through the court news his trumpet, that on such a day Mr. X. Y. Z. gave a grand dinner to princes and to peers, the elect of the land, and what should be the brain of it. The grand farce was called "The Wood Demon, or the Clock Has Struck." The hand, in fact, is pushed forward; the victim is not immolated, the tyrant perishes.

Cherry's "Day in London" was not graced by Mrs. Jordan, like his "Soldier's Daughter," and after the third night he withdrew it. Lewis again, on the 30th of April, occupied the stage by a tragedy called "Adelgitha," for the benefit of Mrs. Powell — seduction again, and horror and remorse, — but it had some good effects. Cherry too reappeared in May at the other house with an operatic "Peter the Great" — it was well got up, and succeeded.

At the close of Drury Lane season, on the 16th of June, Mr. Wroughton, after the suitable ac-

knowledgments for liberal patronage, announced the intention of the proprietors to use their endeavours to procure proper classical and rational entertainments for the following season. How this classical pledge was redeemed we shall naturally be anxious to observe. In the meantime a Gothic pledge was given at the Haymarket for very valuable acting, by the appearance of Charles Young in Hamlet. He had been much admired at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester. He was certainly, at once, the next best actor to Kemble; a man of reading and reflection, with a graceful person, expressive countenance, and fine sonorous voice. He obtained, and deserved, the most enthusiastic applause. Mr. Kemble, on the 23d of June, the night following, acted Hamlet himself, and returned the usual thanks of the season before "Mother Goose" appeared. Kemble was very dry upon such occasions. He was like a man who has but one grace after meat; thanks were to be given, and he gave thanks, but with the old formulary. His greatest wonder always was at facility of invention.

Mrs. Jordan as Euphrosyne (in Comus)

From the picture in the possession of the Duke of Clarence

CHAPTER VIII.

The Classical Season at Drury — Mrs. Jordan Returns after Two Years' Absence — H. Siddons's "Time's a Telltale" — Record on "Men of Leisure" — "Ella Rosenberg," by Kenney — The Patentees and Their Rights — Miss Brunton a Countess — Godwin's "Faulkener" — Philosophy a Fine Thing — The Return of Mrs. Siddons to Covent Garden, and the Destruction of the Theatre Eight Days After — The Dreadful Loss of Lives — Other Losses Enumerated — Cold Comforts — Transition from Despair to Desire — Vanity, Avarice — The Great Emporium of Pleasure for the Privileged Orders — The Glowing Prospect — The Long Persecution and Moderated Result — Consequences Even Now Felt — Mr. Harris — Mr. Kemble and His Accomplished Daughter — Drury Revives "Bluebeard," and Arnold Produces "Man and Wife:" Its Fable — Mrs. Jordan Acts in It, and Speaks an Epilogue — Its Strange Curtsey Couplet — The "Unconscious Counterfeit," a Farce, Succeeds — Sheridan's Brother, in Law, Not Wit — The "Circassian Bride" Perishes the First Night — And the Theatre the Night Following — Previously to the Account of that Catastrophe, Bishop Commended, and His Music for Shakespeare.

THE efforts of the proprietors of Drury were announced by Mr. Wroughton with some confidence; but, excepting Kenney, I know of no author from whom he was likely to obtain more than common productions.

One thing classical they undoubtedly did: they secured Mrs. Jordan again, who had been absent two seasons. She opened the theatre on the 17th of September, 1808, with Peggy, in the "Country Girl," and played it with her peculiar animation. She was enthusiastically welcomed, which cannot be said of the "Comet," which so immediately followed, and was as eagerly gazed at.

Mr. H. Siddons made an effort to supply the desiderata of the proprietors, and he produced a very respectable comedy on the 27th of October, called "Time's a Telltale." His ladies were Miss Duncan, his wife, and Miss Mellon. It was not very striking in its fable, but it yielded matter enough for pointed sentences, to which the author's scholastic habits inclined him. The best of these was an attack upon the men of leisure, which is extremely well turned. The speaker is a character called Record:

"Men of leisure do many things that would startle a plain, drudging, plodding fellow like myself. The town is full of 'em. It is men of leisure that fill the card-table and the gaming-table. Leisure sends the senator to the horse-race, and the peer to the boxing-ring; the daughters of industry are seduced by men of leisure; the sons of plain citizens are corrupted by men of leisure; and it is high time for you, my master, to exert yourself, and give a proof that,

spite of the prevalence of idleness and fashion, the commercial genius of this country shall never be crushed by the vices, follies, and debaucheries of men of leisure."

This season Kenney exhibited a melodrama called "Ella Rosenberg," which had the good fortune to possess Mrs. H. Siddons for its heroine; it was very interesting.

The patentees of the two playhouses now very seriously took counsel's opinion as to the power of the lord chamberlain to infringe, by his licenses, upon their patent rights. The argument is good on both sides. To be sure, if things in this world remained *in statu quo*, one provision, wisely made, would be sufficient. But the population increases, and the popular mind changes. The patentees would not be invaded while their concerns are profitable. Would they like to carry on the amusements if they were otherwise? Would they consent to be bound to the bitters, as well as the sweets, for the popular advantage? — the original ground for their selection and patent security. What power can bind a growing population to two houses and one sort of entertainment?

As a situation which in real life she was never to repeat, Miss Brunton, on the 1st of December, 1808, acted the offending and atoning Lady

Townley. The title was, however, to be assumed without conditions of any sort, but the engagements at the altar. Her father, Mr. John Brunton, had the happiness to give her hand to the Earl of Craven, in the presence of his lordship's noble relatives, and, I believe, he never for an hour regretted that he had chosen the lovely lady, who now quitted the stage for another, which she was equally calculated to adorn.

Again my friend Godwin was destined to feel disappointment in his dramatic adventures, and again, I am sure, he bore it, not with "vain wisdom all, and false philosophy," but the calmness attributed to Horatio, by Hamlet:

> "And blest are those, .
> Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled,
> That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please."

The present play was something like a feature in the life of Savage, the poet; and the mother at least a feeling Countess of Macclesfield. But his ladies are none of them chaste; now, as he scruples not to endow them with other virtues, it is a pity he withholds that quality on the stage, if he supposes theatres may, even occasionally,

give a lesson to society. The tragedy was called "Faulkener."

The season of 1808–09 opened favourably for Covent Garden, on the 12th of September. Mrs. Siddons had recovered her health, and acted Lady Macbeth to her brother's Macbeth. Lewis, Emery, and Simmons were "Raising the Wind" successfully, in Kenney's farce so called, and all looked prosperous and happy. Eight days afterward the theatre was a heap of ruins.

What chiefly affected old Mr. Harris, was the loss of lives, and of lives doubly dear to him as they were sacrificed in the attempt to save his property. I think these sufferers were, in number, twenty-two. A subscription for their families was soon started. I have given, in another work, Kemble's characteristic behaviour, and to that I must refer. The private losses were, perhaps, of fanciful value. Stage jewels are seldom brilliants. Cremonas are rarely worth three hundred guineas, and such an offer for one is seldom made but when it has been nullified by the possessor's assurance that no money should tempt him to part with it. But the prompter's stage copies, the music in score and in parts, the immense wardrobe, the extensive scenery and machinery, were of slow, or

impracticable reproduction. However, the present splendid theatre, and its equipments of every kind, show what may be done by perseverance and patronage. The proprietors of this theatre, in the first sense of their loss, had refused all consolation. "The gratitude of the world, and the people!" exclaimed Kemble to Lord Mountjoy, "My lord, Christ was crucified! De Wit was assassinated! — so much for the world and the people!"

But the comfort at last crept into their minds, and told these despairing managers that they were partially insured, and that in ten years' time, at most, they must have built a new theatre, without such an aid as the fire-offices would now supply. Subscription shares would be sought after rather than shunned by the wealthy, where proprietors were honourable and steady. From utter despair, the transition is easy to extravagant desire. They now allowed both avarice and vanity to point their objects — the new Covent Garden Theatre was to become the grand emporium of pleasure; every refinement of accommodation was to tempt the great; their boxes were to be boudoirs, their very lobby belonged exclusively to their own order. Catalani was to gratify them with song, and D'Egville, no doubt, invent ballets

that should rival the Haymarket, which, observe, had volunteered its roof to shelter those whose own had fallen in, but not crushed their presumption.

The history of the building, its prodigality of cost, its consecration by the high priest of fashion, the long chastisement of all this absurdity in the O. P. war, and the success of its then moderated hopes, are all too recent for dilatation, and too mortifying to be unnecessarily revived. The consequences are even now in operation, and the longest head cannot see a permanence of either profit or peace. Deriving nothing from the theatre, Mr. Harris, the proprietor of seven-twelfths of it, lives upon private funds in France, and cultivates his health and his land there, the theatre being leased, but the lease disputed; and Charles Kemble only last season could reckon himself safe, and that by the ministration of his daughter's talents.

To return to the order of narration. "Bluebeard," which had been dropped for five seasons, was now revived at Drury Lane, embraced, no doubt, in the classical anticipations of Mr. Wroughton. But to do anything worthy of Mrs. Jordan, was reserved for S. J. Arnold, who had

hitherto been confined to farce and opera. On the 5th of January his comedy, called "Man and Wife," was acted a first time, and was received with great applause. The interest is this: a scoundrel contracts a marriage, which he thinks to be illegal — he is deceived in his notion, and bound to all the consequences of his act. The play was strongly cast, — Jordan, the H. Siddons, Dowton, Johnstone, Mathews and Elliston, — and Mrs. Jordan spoke an epilogue, which sported with the supposed alarm of an author. The qualities on which criticism was founded were thus located in this composition: nature in the upper gallery, humour in the lower, learning and taste in the boxes, sense and wit in the pit. There was a shrewdness in elevating learning and taste above sense and wit; but a quaint surprise about the curtsey couplet of the epilogue, hardly pleasing:

> "And now, as brevity's the soul of wit, we know,
> You all, most likely, would like me — to go."

A farce called the "Unconscious Counterfeit," brought forward on the 9th of February, greatly assisted the management; but, on the 23d of that month, a brother-in-law (not in wit) to Mr. Sheridan, as secretary to that farce, the Board of

Management, had the power to get out, with much splendour of decoration, an opera called the "Circassian Bride." There was on this absurd piece lavished a great deal of excellent music by Bishop, who now took that lead which he has maintained amongst us by efforts of such varied beauty. How he has allied himself to Shakespeare everybody knows; and upon the subject of such additions as the music grafted upon his comedies, I am particularly desirous to explain myself, lest what I have written or may still write upon the subject should be liable to misconception, or suspected to be unfriendly. My objection is not to the introduction of music, so called there, in the plays of Shakespeare, but to the converting comedy thus into opera, and singing the speeches of the characters. This totally confounds the species, and is an injury to the fame of Shakespeare. If I am asked how the fame of the poet is concerned in the absurdity, this is my answer: The highest powers of the consummate actor can alone do justice to the perfect conception and language of Shakespeare. What sort of justice can be expected from singers as the representatives of his characters? They must, however gifted, always reserve something

of their full power as speakers for the purpose of supplying the exhausting demands of their vocal and chief exhibition. And so entirely is this the case, that they have a manner of nearing the song, as a sailor would express himself, which is neither speaking nor recitativo, but in some degree partaking of both; that once delivered, the actress sets out upon her symphonious walk till the band are ready for her, and then advances, in full opera trim, to sing the dialogue to the audience rather than continue the colloquy with the actor.

But an end to criticism, which, like many other things in this commercial age, may be judged ill-timed and totally superseded. If the setting "Hamlet" and "Coriolanus" to music will bring money into the theatre, the interest of the proprietors and the palled appetites of the town may command it to be done; and if, for instance, Braham should act below Kemble, it is equally true that Kemble would have sung infinitely below Braham; and "so that chare is chared." Not that Braham, Heaven forbid! would wish such a thing. He is a man of sense as well as a great singer.

I now approach to a catastrophe to which no doctrine of probability has ever yet reconciled me.

On the night of Friday, the 24th of February, 1809, the Apollo Drury (for he presided over its ventilator) was totally consumed by fire, it being five months only since its rival, Covent Garden, perished by similar accident. I never heard any other fair ground assigned for this calamity than the carelessness of the plumbers, who had left their fire unguarded after they had melted their lead and gone about their business after they had done their work. It should be remarked that this said Friday was one in Lent, when to have any amusement would be against the rule. "With this, my lord, myself have nought to do," — it is the rule and must be obeyed, — but the obedience should be a consistent one. If the demands of piety require abstinence from pleasure, they surely require abstinence from labour. The plumbers or any other persons are not to consume a theatre because the players may not act in it. The House of Commons, too, in all its party zeal, was at this moment politically or financially engaged, and Mr. Sheridan was attending his duties as a senator while his theatre was burning. I hastened down from my present house as soon as the news reached me, and stood in the centre of Russell Street in a state of perspiration from the intense heat, while

the water from the plugs was flowing over my feet. I saw the Apollo sink in flames into the building, and then returned home cheerless and gloomy to reflect upon the scene I had beheld. The fire commenced in what was called the coffee-room, on the first story in the front next Brydges Street, out of which the communication was direct with the first circle of boxes, so that the progress of the flame, once in volume, was directed and fed in its course by the woodwork of the boxes, and the iron curtain did not of itself drop to stop its accession to the stage, — a mass of combustible matter. Johnston, the machinist, resided close to the theatre; in five minutes after he entered it the conflagration became total. The walls fell at the mere burning of the beams, and the cause became apparent. The edifice was erected on timber piers cased with brick and faced with white cement.

The news reached the House of Commons by message to Mr. Sheridan, but at the same moment its own windows showed the brilliant reflection of the disaster in the sky, and from the Surrey side of the river. Many of the members hurried to the top of the house, and others to Westminster Bridge, to witness the sublimity of its effects.

Mr. W. Elliot and Lord Temple proposed that the House should adjourn in delicate attention to the loss sustained by so distinguished a member. Mr. Sheridan in a low tone of voice, but affected deeply by the kindness manifested toward him, observed that "he could not consider the misfortune to be of a proper nature to interrupt the proceedings of the House." However, he himself, accompanied by a few personal friends, hastened to the spot, and after standing some minutes in dreadful agony in the front of the building, he was prevailed on to retire to the Piazza coffee-house, where he could receive and make any communications that were proper on the occasion. He had lost poor Richardson, who knew better than anybody how to manage him. But the Duke of York and Lord Mountjoy were soon with him, and he supported himself with great firmness, though it was obvious that it destroyed him. He spoke feelingly of "those who would now need support which he could not give," and felt consolation that no lives had been sacrificed, as had been the case so lately in the destruction of his friend Harris's theatre.

Drury Lane Theatre was insured to the amount of £35,000 only, of which the Imperial and the

Hope offices sustained two-thirds. Covent Garden was covered rather farther, I believe; but the offices now, I think, grow unwilling to take such very combustible risks but at ruinous rates of premium, and the duty to the state being twice the amount of the premium, proprietors of theatres must insure themselves by their care. Westminster Abbey, St. James's Palace, St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden, the theatre in the same spot, Drury Lane Theatre just at hand, Astley's on the other side of the Thames, within so short a time, exceeding the usual recurrence of the same throw upon the dice, were in a very serious way imputed, some of them at least, to malevolence or design, of which the advantage was very difficult even to shadow out.

Mrs. Jordan was understood to be the principal sufferer among the performers. From her residence commonly at Bushy, she might retain more of her dress and decorations in the theatre than any other lady in the company. Her jewels, I should think, she never left there, because theatres might be robbed as well as burnt, and the silversmith is, I believe, the usual depository of the diamonds of our shining stars. Mathews, on the alarm, ran from Richard Wilson's, in Lincoln's

Inn Fields, in time to save some of his peculiar property, and his companions snatched something at least from destruction. Sheridan lost that admirable clock which had been Garrick's, worth £700, and which, in the time of Roscius, with the accounts of the theatre, was wound up once a year; the first Mrs. Sheridan's pianofortes; and all the furniture of the treasurer of the navy, ousted from Somerset Place, the spoils of official splendour, — consumed, in all likelihood, before they were paid for.

If what White, the fireman belonging to the British, said was true, he had himself, two days before the accident, inspected the reservoir, and all the plugs and pipes, which, opening upon the tiers of boxes, could most certainly have been played in time upon the running flames, had there been a single nose merely on the alert in the theatre. The machinist enters it only to make his exit. Workmen in the month of February quit early. For five hours, at least, I am to suppose that this immense pile had not a creature in it except the maudlin crew about the stage-door. Was no woman in the wardrobe, no tailor, no cap-maker in the roof, no copyist, either musical or farcical, busy from five o'clock till ten, — nothing

to be done, merely because for that night there was no play to be acted? Workmen or incendiaries, whichever you call them, guilty or innocent, permitted the run of the theatre unquestioned, unobserved; no person at dusk going around to close windows, or examine fires, either to extinguish or leave them safe. A barrel of gunpowder and the sparks of a forge left in full confidence side by side.

The Apollo Theatre (for Sheridan did not adore Shakespeare to the extent that Kemble or Garrick did) was opened under the management of Mr. Kemble, for plays, on the 21st of April, 1794. "Macbeth" was the play, and Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, and Charles, their brother, then bore triumphantly the standard of Shakespeare for the defeat of all that was spurious and disgraceful in the management of the rival house. Fifteen years had not elapsed when this mighty strength quitted the edifice in which they gloried and laboured for the prosperity of "Antium." Even Mrs. Jordan had withdrawn herself for two seasons, and now returned only to suffer in its fall.

As to Mr. Sheridan, I cannot conceive a situation more distressing than that which must have

occupied his thoughts almost to madness. The edifice from which he was in some way to be supported, was in ashes, and the time was gone by when the credit of his genius could rebuild it. The genius of credit now stopped his mouth with security when he required Holland for another edifice. The prize of ambition, that so long had glittered before his eyes, had eluded his grasp. The triumph of his party had been blighted by the death of Fox. He was not considered a fit leader even for the Whigs. The parliamentary logic was amused, not led, by his rhetoric; and his eloquence seemed to remit of its splendour, as competition had been withdrawn from his jealousy. Pitt, whose citadel of pride he delighted to annoy with his Congreve-rockets, was gone; and Fox, as if he could not live but in opposition, had merely touched the seals of office to yield them "with a breath." Carlton House itself had grown tired of an eternal contest for objects not its own, and in the probable assumption of the regency would, in all likelihood, quit its old friends, as too long upon a footing of equality to be very humble servants to a master.

With the dignity of genius, Sheridan had always borne himself too high for patronage in his calam-

ity. The humbler situation of Kemble, an actor and a servant of the public, left him open to princely and noble bounty, which he could accept without a blush, though the mere exercise of his talent always secured him a princely income. Sheridan could not now take office: he had not application. He was accustomed to an irregular life — the tavern and Brookes's, and the houses of a few friends and some dependents, where he would establish himself at his ease, take anything that chance supplied, and frequently sleep where he had dined and supped. So it was with Peter Moore, with Michael Kelly, with Peake, his treasurer, and some others. He there affected the prince incog.; they were no doubt honoured by his troublesome condescension, and two of the trio thus returned him no small part of their stage income. To one or other of these friends he would come after a debate in the House, and seem neither to remember, nor require, another sort of home.

When I first had the honour to know Mr. Sheridan, his face, though always florid, was rendered agreeable by a smile that was almost as great a passport as Mrs. Jordan's laugh. His eye was full and luminous, and became terrible indeed

when he defended himself against an assailant of his character. He used then to dress rather carefully, and submitted to the drudgery of hair-dressing, as if he had time to spare for puffing. But in his latter period, he muffled himself in a threadbare greatcoat, and seemed to thread his way through by-streets to the House, with his eyes surveying the pavement, or, if reared, presenting only the glassy look of abstraction, and the swollen feature of excess; but his temper was exquisite, and his manners frank and always unceremonious. If the philosophy of antiquity admonished the mighty, "Remember that thou art a man," one was delighted to see, in the reverse of his fortune and the decline of his health, the respect that in public loved to wait upon the great orator and still greater wit. There needed no public crier to admonish the people. Genius awfully whispered as he passed :

"Remember that he is Sheridan."

With the fall of the theatre was ascertained the retirement of Mrs. Jordan from all permanent engagements as an actress. As Mr. Taylor of the Opera House had given leave to perform three nights for the benefit of the sufferers of humble

rank in the theatre, she acted the Country Girl there, on the 23d of March. Indeed, it was chiefly with a view to throw some additional comforts, by her own exertion, into the establishments of her daughters, that she returned to the stage the present season, it not being the wish of her illustrious friend that she should continue in the profession of which she was so great an ornament. Enough has been thrown out, sometimes supported by illustrations from the author's text, at others by simple reference, and often by proverbial dicta, to denote what kind of actress she was. But the charm about her was not to be evinced by analysis :

> " Like following life, in creatures we dissect —
> We lose it in the moment we detect."

We only know and feel that it did exist, and that we were attached by its power. A critical friend once told her he had detected it, and humourously called it her swindling laugh. " You have caught, madam," said he, " the hearty enjoyment of unrestrained infancy, delighting in its own buoyancy ; and you have preserved this in children of a larger growth, who in the world are checked and blighted by decorum and art, authority and hypocrisy."

"What," said she, "then you have found me out! Something very like what you say may be the secret of my success." But to her general merits on the stage we shall return at the close. At present we forbear from a theme which is so grateful to us. A momentous point in her life is about to open upon us, which we are happily enabled to illustrate by her own letters. They will show her, though deeply suffering, generous, candid, and affectionate; meriting a very different fate, but drawn on from circumstances over which she could have no control, to encounter alienation and unsuspected difficulty, the failure of her maternal hopes, and the embarrassment of her finances. A noble fortune, acquired by unexampled toil, mouldering away unaccountably from her disposal, and her independence at last consisting in an annuity, which sprung solely from the bounty of him whose happiness she had promoted for nearly twenty years of even exemplary attachment and confidence.

CHAPTER IX.

Domestic Arrangements of Mrs. Jordan — Her Three Daughters, Their Husbands and Intended Fortunes — Sir Richard Ford, His Marriage with Miss Booth — Attacks upon Mrs. Jordan in the Newspapers — Reports of a Violent Quarrel between the Duke and Herself — Mrs. Jordan Writes to a Confidential Friend — The Advice Given to Her — Withdraws from Town Theatricals — Visits Bath with One of Her Daughters — Ludicrous Scene at One of the Libraries — The Author's Opinion of Her Conduct — Doctor Johnson — Mrs. Jordan's Letter from Bath — States Her Success in Her Profession — Her Burthens and the Result — Tired of the Profession — Popular Enthusiasm about Her — Her Own Admirable Description of the Ladies Who Know Everything but Her Person — Her Return to Bushy, and Visit to Dublin — Her Letter as to Her Prospects There — Author's Observations — Her Manner in Society — Like Mrs. Siddons, no Showy Talker — Treatment of Her by the Irish Manager, Jones — And the Danes in His Company — Poor Old Barrett Provided For by Her — Others Relieved, from Early Knowledge — Actions for Defamation — Corri and His Libels — Assails the Friends of Mrs. Jordan as Well as Herself.

RS. JORDAN, during the years 1808 and 1809, was engaged in preliminary arrangements for the marriage of her three daughters. The eldest, Frances, became Mrs. Alsop: her husband was in the ordnance

office, and, I think, if I can trust to memory, clerk of the delivery of small arms. I am confirmed in this notion by knowing that the situation has been abolished. There is a respectability attached to the clerkships in government offices, which belongs to no other subordinates in life. The gentlemen who fill them rank as esquires in the red book, and, why I know not, are supposed, in their style of living, to be little bounded by the mere salaries of their respective situations. Miss Jordan was in her twenty-sixth year when she gave her hand to Mr. Thomas Alsop; his residence then was at No. 11 Park Place, and with their married sister Miss Dora and Miss Lucy domesticated, until, in the year following, with the approbation of their mother, Miss Dora became the wife of Frederick Edward March, Esq., as I understand, a natural son of Lord Henry Fitzgerald, who was also a clerk in the ordnance office; and, in 1810, the youngest, Miss Lucy, was united to General, then Colonel, Hawker, of the 14th Light Dragoons. The reader will bear in mind that their mother had, under her own hand, publicly devoted her fortune, and a portion of the gains of her professional exertion, to a provision for these ladies, now that she herself, by accepting a splendid

connection, might look to the probability of having a new and a large additional family, on the presumption of good conduct, no way likely to be in any manner burthensome to her. The fortunes intended for her daughters are clearly noted in a private letter from Mrs. Jordan herself.

"I am sure you will be pleased to hear that your young friend Lucy is about to be married, much to my satisfaction, to Colonel Hawker, of the 14th Dragoons; he is a most excellent man, and has a very good private property; she will make the best of wives, — a better girl never lived; it makes me quite happy, and I intend to give her the value of £10,000."

I purposely place this here, as some, though a slight excuse for those who, in addition to expensive inclinations, marrying what are called girls with fortunes, might think themselves bound to commence and continue establishments suited rather to their fancies than their finances. I believe the sons-in-law alike received £2,000 of these ten, and an annual present, something like £200, from Mrs. Jordan, while she had the means to give it. The reader will himself apply this information, when he hears of subsequent

embarrassments deeply afflicting the generous woman, who had no longer the means of relieving them.

Two of these young ladies were the daughters of Sir Richard Ford, and it was natural to suppose that, when he really married (which he did [1]), he would, if he had the means, make some sort of settlement upon them, if he had not already done it when he yielded up their mother to the preferable protection of another. In any direct way the young ladies never received provision from their father, and if anything indirectly was given for them to their mother, it was swallowed up in the gulf of her enormous expenses; nothing remains.

Mrs. Jordan now became the subject of a great variety of attacks, in the infamous prints of the time, probably levelled at her purse, and conceiving the union of her daughters with two gentlemen in public life a happy opportunity to work

[1] He married a Miss Booth, with whom he got some property. Of all the men whom it has been my chance to know, I never knew a man of whom there is so little to tell as Sir Richard Ford. I asked men of his own standing at the bar, and on the bench, their recollections of Ford. They knew him, as I did, personally, but he had impressed their minds as a fly would their hands, — they had just shaken it, and it was gone.

upon her fears or their delicacy. Among other matters, "they understood (by which the reader always understands, if he knows them, they invented) a violent quarrel between the duke and herself." Royal dukes, at this time, occupied, unfortunately, the full breath of rumour, and one unhappy business soon bared to the public eye a scene of gross and most inexcusable folly, on one part, and of wanton, profligate, subtle, and unblushing exposure on the other. The leveller rioted now in evidence of royal weakness, and saw in this childish prologue the opening of a scene sufficient to destroy the credit of a throne, that should exist only by its virtue. Mrs. Jordan thus acknowledges the sympathy of a confidential friend:

[*Copy.*]

"Bushy House, Sunday.

"Dear Sir: — I should be very ungrateful indeed, if I could, for a moment, consider as an enemy one from whom I have received very decided proofs of kindness and attention. I love candour and truth on all occasions, and the frankness with which you speak of my professional merits, stamps a value on your opinion of them;

and which (*entre nous*) I really believe is quite as much as they deserve; but we do not feel inclined to quarrel with the world for thinking better of us than we deserve.

"I do not know how to thank you for the humanity with which you seem to enter into my feelings; they are, indeed, very acute; and did you know the three incomparable, and truly amiable objects of my anxiety, you would not be inclined to withdraw your sympathy.

"With regard to the report of my quarrel with the duke, every day of our past and present lives must give the lie to it. He is an example for half the husbands and fathers in the world, the best of masters, and the most firm and generous of friends. I will, in a day or two, avail myself of your kind offer to contradict those odious, and truly wicked reports. I am so ill that I can do nothing myself, but must wait for the assistance of a good and clever friend, who is at present out of the way, and who (if truth is not quite scared out of the world) will endeavour to do away the ill impressions those reports were meant to make. In the meantime, accept my thanks, and believe me,

"Yours truly,

"DORA JORDAN."

The press continued its assault, and Mrs. Jordan did take the advice to which she alludes. It was exactly that which I, myself, should have given (perhaps did give). She wrote a second letter to her friend, communicating the result of the conference, and of the duke's decision as to her professional conduct. She also apprises him of an intended visit from Alsop and March, which those gentlemen, I know, never made.

[*Copy.*]

"Bushy House, March 27, 1809.

"Dear Sir: — When I last did myself the pleasure of writing to you, I mentioned that I waited for the assistance of a friend, who was not just then in the way, to contradict the cruel and infamous reports that were then in circulation; but on my application to him (perhaps he was right), he said that what had been done had every good effect that could possibly be expected or wished for; and that a renewal of the subject might do more harm than good. Of this I should like to have your opinion, when you have read the enclosed. I need not add that you will set the author down for a very partial friend indeed. In obedience to the duke's wishes, I have withdrawn

myself for the present, or, at least, till there is a theatre royal for me to appear in. Mr. March and Mr. Alsop, the two gentlemen to whom my daughters are married, will do themselves the pleasure of leaving their cards at your door next week. I ever am, sir,

"Your obliged, humble servant,

"DORA JORDAN.

"I am to play to-morrow week at the Opera House; and, as it is likely to be my last night, it would not be amiss to have it 'insinuated into the boxes.'"

A second letter, upon the subject of her daughters, to the same friend, undated, may as well be placed here.

(Without date.) Written in 1809.

"DEAR SIR:— Having frequently experienced your kindness, in assisting to do away any unfair impression, your candour, believe me, cannot be better employed than in the defence of three as good and virtuous girls as ever existed. It would be painful to me, and unnecessary to you, to mention the cruel and infamous reports for some time in circulation; and to the extent of which I was

really a stranger till last week. To say it has made me 'sick at heart,' is saying little. I remain,

"Your obliged, humble servant,

"DORA JORDAN."

After the performance in question at the Opera House, where also Madame Catalani volunteered her great talents for the houseless sons and daughters of Drury, Mrs. Jordan saw nothing to detain her from her country engagements, and, accordingly, left Bushy, with one of her daughters, for Bath. Like her old consort, Sir Peter, in the "School for Scandal," she found that polite place quite informed upon a subject of which she was ignorant herself, and had the happiness to hear, unknown, from those who were so well acquainted with her domestic history, all the terrible particulars attending her unconscious separation from the duke. Her letters are always careless, unstudied effusions, written as fast as the pen will cover the paper. The following, however, is singularly valuable, as it unfolds much of her personal history, and proves how affectionately she had answered the numerous calls of family upon her professional emoluments. She herself, it will be remarked, considered her success through life as most extraor-

dinary, and, notwithstanding her almost boundless liberality to her relations, in her modest estimate of her claims, she thought that she had certainly obtained enough; however, her duty, as she conceived, to others, still urged her to go on. Her sincerity, a great feature in her character, openly confesses that, as to the talents around her, she is not excited by emulation, and that her vanity has long been gratified to the height.

But she never acted better in her life than at the library, the Bath "School for Scandal." Doctor Johnson would have said, had he received such a letter from her, "Say no more, dearest; rest your epistolary, aye, and social fame too, upon your description of the conduct which followed that impertinence:

"'In pity to them, I left the place immediately, and flatter myself I did not show any disgust or ill nature on the occasion.'"

It reads to my ear and heart like one of those hopes of his own moderation that the sage was wont to murmur into the ear of the diligent and reverential Boswell.

"BATH, Sunday, 22d April, 1809.

"DEAR SIR: — I should be more insensible than

my heart tells me I am, if I did not experience much gratification from your very kind and friendly letters: friendly they must be, for, though I am ever asking favours of you, I feel it impossible that I can ever return them.

"My professional success through life has, indeed, been most extraordinary; and, consequently, attended with great emoluments. But from my first starting in life, at the early age of fourteen, I have always had a large family to support. My mother was a duty. But on brothers and sisters I have lavished more money than can be supposed, and more, I am sorry to say, than I can well justify to those who have a stronger and prior claim on my exertions. With regard to myself (as much depends on our ideas of riches), I have certainly enough; but this is too selfish a consideration to weigh one moment against what I consider to be a duty. I am quite tired of the profession. I have lost those great excitements, vanity and emulation. The first has been amply gratified, and the last I see no occasion for; but still, without these, it is a mere money-getting drudgery.

"The enthusiasm of the good people here is really ridiculous; but it brings 'grist to the mill,'

and I shall, notwithstanding the great drawback of unsettled weather, clear, between this place and Bristol, from £800 to £900.

"Though I very seldom go out, when from home, I was tempted, by my dear girl, to go to a fashionable library to read the papers; and, not being known, was entertained by some ladies with a most pathetic description of the parting between me and the duke! My very dress was described, and the whole conversation accurately repeated! Unfortunately for the party, a lady came in who immediately addressed me by name, which threw them into the most ridiculous and (I conceive) the most unpleasant embarrassment imaginable. In pity to them, I left the place immediately, and flatter myself I did not show any disgust or ill-nature on the occasion.

"The last favour I asked of you was not to gratify my own vanity, but my best friends; who, in spite of the world, are, I can with truth assure you, as much interested about me as they were seventeen years ago. Believe me ever,

"Your truly obliged,

"DORA JORDAN.

"P. S. I fear I have tired you with my scrawl."

Mrs. Jordan returned from Bath to Bushy, and after attending to the arrangements of the family, set out on her promised visit to Dublin. Mr. Jones was now manager of the theatre, and, it might have been presumed, sufficiently attentive to his own interest to secure effective support to the great actress, now, in the maturity of her talents, returning to her native country. With some painful and more agreeable impressions she arrived in the sister kingdom, and soon communicated her success to her confidential friend. The reader will see, too, the mother's feeling for a son, then distinguishing himself in the service of his country, and whom she seems to have followed through his perilous career with rational admiration.

"DUBLIN, Sunday, June 18, 1809.

"DEAR SIR: — I had left Bushy for this place before the arrival of your letter. That you would enter into my feelings respecting my dear boy I was convinced when I sent you the 'extract,' and, as you very rightly supposed, only meant it for your own perusal; for, however gratifying it might be to my feeling to see any testimonial of his good conduct before the world, I have reason to believe that he would be very angry with me if

he thought I had made it public. I only mention this to show you that he is an unassuming, modest boy; so much so, that we never could get him to speak of the business at Corunna, where he was himself concerned, but the accounts of him from every other quarter were, indeed, most gratifying.

"With regard to myself I have not much to say; the audience are, of course, very kind, and my reception was most brilliant. But, *entre nous*, I do not think I shall make as much money as I expected. With every good wish, I remain, dear sir,

"Your most obliged, humble servant,

"DORA JORDAN."

She was in truth greatly admired on the present visit, and the warmth of the Irish having a convivial tendency, she received a variety of invitations from persons of consideration in Dublin, who were curious to know the effect of such exhilarating powers in society. But, like Mrs. Siddons, she was no showy talker, nor anxious to display her wit, though every countenance invited her sallies, and would have been delighted with a sketch of life from one so able to display it. But

she made no sign in company of her professional powers; she coveted nothing but what they might easily afford her, the respect due to the manners of a gentlewoman, whose conversation, never obtrusive, was always marked by good sense and the most exact propriety.

But, as if the spirit of Daly had survived in the theatre disgraced by his conduct, it was there alone that respect failed toward a lady who was one of its rarest ornaments. Performers below mediocrity were appointed to act with her, and, in addition to the want of talent, there was a total want of decency among them. The Dane had got among them, and they were powerful only in "potting." Cues they were unable to give, they knew nothing of the stage business; and she was so much annoyed in her own situations, that with some of the bad she absolutely refused to play at all. Perhaps she was most injured among this crew of raff by her own virtue. There was (like Gray's solitary fly whose May of existence had long flown by) an actor of the name of Barrett, now old and in distressed circumstances. He had witnessed her début, and she provided for him, and extended her bounty to others who had formerly been known to her in the profession.

There is an *esprit de corps* among actors that is capable of liberal and generous interpretation, and nothing but the most despicable malignity, one would think, could see in such humane goodness anything invidious or partial; but, perhaps, in compliment to the manager's injustice, they viewed her with sullen ill-will at the theatre, and she soon was to receive the intelligence of actions of defamation and periodical libels, all growing out of the engagement she had made to divide the house with Jones, by which he got considerable audiences and she very little money.

A fellow of the name of Corri had raised himself to some notice by the continuance of his libels on Mrs. Jordan and her friends, among whom he was certainly warranted to include Sir Jonah Barrington and his family. The libeller classed Mrs. Jordan some way or other with her Grace the Duchess of Gordon, probably as a matchmaker, but the matter is not worth inquiry. Sir Jonah prosecuted the printer, and did everything that could be done to restrain the ungentlemanly and malapert exuberance of Mr. Gold, who was counsel for the defendant. His speech, highly disgraceful to him, came into the public prints and greatly annoyed Mrs. Jordan, whose sentiments

upon the occasion are thus expressed in her letter to Sir Jonah. She does not date her letters farther than by the day of the week in which they are written; a modest presumption, unsustained by the fact, that they can be only of temporary interest.

[*Copy.*]

"Bushy House, Wednesday.

"My Dear Sir: — Not having the least suspicion of the business in Dublin, it shocked and grieved me very much; not only on my own account, but I regret that I should have been the involuntary cause of anything painful to you, or to your amiable family. But of Mr. Jones I can think anything; and I beg you will do me the justice to believe that my feelings are not selfish. Why, indeed, should I expect to escape their infamous calumnies? Truth, however, will force its way, and justice exterminate that nest of vipers. I wanted nothing from Mr. Crompton's generosity, but I had a claim on his justice, his honour.

"During the two representations of the 'Inconstant,' I represented to him the state Mr. Dwyer was in, and implored him, out of respect to the audience, if not in pity to my terrors, to change the play. As to the libel on Mr. Dwyer, charged

to me by Mr. Gold, I never, directly or indirectly, by words or by writing, demeaned myself by interfering in the most remote degree with so wretched a concern. I knew no editor, I read no newspapers, while in Dublin. The charge is false and libellous on me, published, I presume, through Mr. Gold's assistance. Under that view of the case, he will feel himself rather unpleasantly circumstanced should I call upon him either to prove or disavow his assertions. To be introduced any way into such a business, shocks and grieves me; he might have pleaded for his companions without calumniating me; but for the present, I shall drop an irksome subject, which has already given me more than ordinary uneasiness.

"Yours, etc.,

"DORA JORDAN."

The calumniated lady seriously turned her thoughts in consequence to an action for defamation, but the peculiarity of her situation rendered that the very last thing that a sound adviser would recommend. To be sure, a generous nature like hers would feel itself prompted to show her sons that they had no ground, for a moment, to impute to their mother what malignity had charged upon

her. Her eldest son had been distinguishing himself in the Peninsular war, and his spirited and ardent mind was not, she thought, to be insulted in his parent, while he was applauded by his country.

But the complexion of juries was changeable, — judges sometimes fastidious, — counsel frequently scurrilous and brutal, and, making a scripture of their briefs, pursuing their instructions to an extent that confounds all evidence, tortures and disfigures all fact, and looking at their success for their client as the sole object of him who paid the fee, placard their coarse dexterity to secure retainers, and, like the professors of another black art, are contented to set to mercenary sale the immortal part of the profession, its devotion to justice.

While she, therefore, was wisely decided against this sort of warfare, one of a different kind ere long excited all her sensibility — the great battle of Talavera. Her comforter, too, was at Brighton, but his attention to her feelings was amiably on the alert to relieve them.

"Bushy, Thursday, August 17, 1809.

"I am very vain, but still I have judgment enough not to be fond of doing that which I know

I do very ill. Still I feel pleasure in writing to you, who so kindly enter into all my feelings. You may easily guess what they were last Monday night, when I heard the account of the battle of Talavera. Five thousand killed! the duke at Brighton! I went to bed, but not to sleep.

"The duke set out at five o'clock on the Tuesday, to be the first to relieve me from my misery. I am mentally relieved, but it has torn my nerves to pieces. I have five boys, and must look forward to a life of constant anxiety and suspense. I am at present very ill. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me,

"Your ever obliged,

"DORA JORDAN."

CHAPTER X.

Attachments of the Princes — Prince of Wales — Duke of York — Duke of Clarence — The Picture of the Felicity of Bushy — Its Interruption — The Scene at Cheltenham — And Mrs. Jordan's Letters on the Separation — The Result in a Generous Provision for Mrs. Jordan and the Children.

BEFORE I can possibly touch upon any disagreement between the royal duke and Mrs. Jordan, it seems necessary to look at the position of some other members of his illustrious house, and inquire how far it was calculated to fulfil the wishes of their venerable parent, their condition in the state, or the reasonable expectations of the public. As I consider the union of the Prince of Wales with his cousin, the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, to have disposed for ever of the question as to Mrs. Fitzherbert, nothing beyond an idle curiosity can exist, to know whether, with benevolent intention, in any form, a ceremony of marriage, known at the time by both to be invalid, passed between the parties.

I always considered Horne Tooke's pamphlet on the subject to be designedly mischievous. He calls the lady in question, throughout, her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales; talks of the marriage as positive, and compliments her Royal Highness on her exalted station, and the public on her eminent virtues, and at the same time points out, with peculiar industry, the provisions of the Act which constitutes the marrying of a papist a forfeiture of the crown of these realms. The degrading notion, that there is an impropriety in the marriage with a subject, in other words, "that a beautiful English woman is unworthy to be the companion of an English prince, is a ridiculous phantom, imported into this land only with the house of Hanover." Assuming the marriage to be indubitable, and that the lady in question was a papist, he thus boldly and characteristically expresses himself: "I should be more than willing, even anxious, to barter the papist marriage for the responsibility of counsellors, and the independence of the representative body, being much more easily contented to trust the sovereign with a papist wife than with a corrupt Parliament." To be sure; nor would his trust be any considerable burden to him with such

a Parliament as he fancied incorrupt, opposed to everything like rank and preëminence, and before whom monarchs and nobles would be as dust in the balance.

One of his best sophisms is the utterly refusing to believe that any disavowal of the marriage in question ever was or could be given from authority. "I consider," says he, "the story of a disavowal to be itself an additional slander on a much misunderstood and misrepresented young man. I have no doubt (for he is young, and a prince) that some things (though I know them not) might possibly be changed for the better in his conduct. But I will not believe that at any time, and least of all in the moment and manner as reported, such a disavowal (be the marriage true or false), or anything tending to lessen the character of the lady, could possibly be authorised by him. No, I will never believe it, because I remember very well what a half-civilised barbarian [Peter the Great] replied to his uncivilised counsellors, who advised him to give up a man, not a woman, to the extreme necessity of his situation. 'No,' replied the prince, 'I can resign my dominions, even up to the walls of my metropolis, for in happier circumstances they may hereafter

be recovered, but the forfeiture of honour in a sovereign can never be retrieved.'"

The reported compromise: "We will pay your debts; we will complete Carlton House, but we cannot augment your income, until you are married." Until you are married! What a picture of meanness and degeneracy does this report exhibit! Administration and opposition concurring in nothing — but unblushingly to palm a falsehood on the world. The conduct on neither side will bear the honest reasoning of a plain mind. You will not augment the income; you think it then sufficient. If sufficient, the debts should not have been contracted. If they should not have been contracted they should not be paid. Is there anything defective in this short argument? Perhaps not, but it is too rigorous; it suits better the coldness of a judge, than the affection of a parent. — I think so too. But his Majesty was a son before he was a father. He therefore refuses to believe that the ministers seriously can be authorised to discharge the debts of the present Prince of Wales, while those of his grandfather, Frederick, forty years standing, remain unpaid.

This is indeed dexterous; but enough has been said to show the prince's situation.

I remember Sheridan's once stating in the House, from authority, that, "whatever had been the errors of a certain lady in point of faith, she adhered to them no longer," a declaration entirely nugatory, if the nation could never be affected by the consequences of her opinions. The tone, too, assumed by that lady, when, at her own instance, a choice had been made by a great personage, which she disposed of almost as soon as it was made (I allude to Mrs. Crouch), seemed to indicate power as well as caprice, in one who must be propitiated for sundry weighty reasons. But this had passed away, and however deeply it might offend the revered monarch, it had the apology, at first, of nature and passion, which did not equally sanction the long welcome afforded to every political opponent of that parent's government.

The Duke of York, the king's favourite son, had, with the full concurrence of his family, married the Princess Royal of Prussia; thus preceding his illustrious brother, the prince, in legitimate alliance by four years. This was a marriage about which there could not be two opinions, and there never was a doubt that her Royal Highness retained the perfect respect of her royal husband to the last hour of her existence. She died in

August, 1820, sincerely honoured by all ranks. It must have been deeply distressing to one who, like his Majesty the king, had no mistress but his wife, to hear of the very degrading connection which subsisted for a length of time between a prince so wedded, and a woman of the description of Mary Ann Clarke. Of an establishment, too, for such a person in Gloucester Place, which £10,000 a year, economically applied, could scarcely keep up; for which the duke's own disposable funds were inadequate, and no other resources could be found that did not in some way dishonour him. The result proved that the duke never had been able to supply this lady much beyond his credit, and upon a perception of her influence (if there was no invitation to do so) this audacious person undertook to put her noble friend's favour up to nearly public sale: to ask for appointments, and condition for equivalents, as to persons hardly known to her by name, and I fear, in some instances, —

> "To sell and mart her offices for gold
> To undeservers."

Mary Ann Clarke was the daughter of people called Thompson, and born in an alley, communi-

cating with a worse, in Chancery Lane, and her infant years had every contamination that could proceed from the abodes of the most disgusting profligacy. Upon the death of her father her mother married a second husband, whose name was Farquhar; he was a compositor in the printing-office of Mr. Hughes; she had thus an early acquaintance with letters, and her stepfather gave her the best instruction in his power, with a view, under his own eye, to render her useful in reading copy[1] in the printing-office, to the corrector of the press. As Mr. Hughes was a printer in great practice, Mary Ann was never suffered to be idle. She must always have been fair, and even lovely; was uncommonly sprightly, but pursued her studies in the black art without injury to her character, under the control of Mr. Farquhar.

The overseer of Hughes's printing-office was a Mr. Day, and his son had not been insensible to the beauty and application of the fair reader of the house. He formed the generous design of

[1] Copy. The word is technical, and signifies the matter, whether in manuscript or print, which is given out to compositors to set up for a work in hand. Junius shows himself acquainted with the mysteries of the printing-house, I remember, by the use of this word. A stranger would never call the original, copy. "Let me know when you want more copy."

making her his wife, and, to render her a suitable helpmate, he sent her, at his own expense, to a boarding-school of eminence at Ham, in the county of Essex. She passed two years there, making the most rapid strides, for she went thither with that literal knowledge that such places, for the most part, never thoroughly teach; for the highly accomplished are often miserably deficient in the elements of their own language. But all that the school taught of elegant refinements —

> "She took, as we take air,
> Fast as 'twas ministered."

But her return showed the fallacy of all sage provisions in affairs of the heart. Miss Mary was neither grateful to her lover, nor disposed to apply her acquisitions in the way of business, which Mr. Day properly and systematically considered.

Her mother and her husband now changed their abode from the Bowl and Pin Alley to the ominous shelter of Black Raven Passage, Cursitor Street, Holborn. While in this situation, Mary Ann laid a pawnbroker under some sort of contribution, and in her seventeenth year she married a Mr. Joseph Clarke, the second son of a wealthy bricklayer, in Angel Court, Snow Hill. Destined

to the court and the passage, she seemed to be on the advance as to their prefix. Angel Court was a title that raised no blush when it was pronounced. Clarke had served his time at the very corner of the Black Raven Passage, through which he soon conveyed away his intended bride from that ominous resort to the free air of Pentonville, where she became a mother. From Pentonville they passed on to Hoxton, and Clarke, not choosing to practise his craft as a stone-mason, resorted so frequently to Angel Court for assistance, that the worthy bricklayer remonstrated with the son, and he with his helpmate, as to the great expenses of their establishment. They had now a second child, and previous to the birth of a third, Mr. Clarke led Mary Ann to the altar of St. Pancras, and at eighteen she had the full title to the name become so distinguished by her subsequent conquests. Serious thoughts arrive upon serious engagements. Clarke, after enjoying his Circe in Hoxton Square for two years, removed to Golden Lane (if names are anything, the very place to find money), and, by his father's liberality, established himself there in business. But he had contracted a love of idleness and habits foreign to his profession and his interest. He had con-

vivial talents, and delighted to exercise them, and in three or four years he increased the horrible list of bankrupts, which forms an octavo volume yearly in the history of the commerce of these kingdoms.

Mrs. Clarke left her husband to exist on a weekly guinea, allowed him by his father, and accepted the protection of sundry men of fashion, who engaged to provide for her and her children. She is said to have sought the show-glass of the theatre for the sale of her charms, and to have succeeded with sundry worshippers of notoriety. I regret to add, a late illustrious duke to the Dowlers and the Ogilvies, who carried their insufficient fuel to support the blazing extravagance of her mansion, No. 18 Gloucester Place, Portman Square. The connection with the duke furnished Colonel Wardle with matter sufficient to engage the attention of the House. The particular intromission of the lady in the appointments to levies and commissions, and barrack, and even clerical situations, was established *ad nauseam.* She herself exhibited the most audacious self-possession and pointed raillery. The ministers made their stand on the ground that his Royal Highness knew nothing of pecuniary equivalents, but the

business grew sufficiently serious to bring disgrace from the connection, and the duke resigned his situation as commander-in-chief, to forestall a probable address for his removal.

Now then was the time for Mary Ann to renew her connection with the press. Sir Richard Phillips, I think, declined to publish her memoirs, but recommended a publisher, and such was the delight in royal exposure that an edition of 18,000 copies was perhaps not too boldly printed. Near an hundred letters, too, to the darling, were destined to see the light, and sundry opinions as to the individuals of the royal family itself, couched in no measured, but indecent language, threatened even the fraternal harmony of the family.

> "Deux coqs vivaient en paix: une poule survint,
> Et voilà la guerre allumée —
> Amour! tu perdis Troie."

The whole mass was bought up, by a douceur of £10,000 to the lady, an annuity of £400 for herself, and £200 for her two daughters; her son also was to be provided for. The printer, Gillett, was paid a sum of £1,500 for print and paper, and the whole was consumed, I think, at his house. There were some other annuities for bringing this

business to so happy a close, and the darling was for a long time in every mouth, in the United Kingdoms.

To show the readiness of this woman, one anecdote shall suffice. On the 3d of July, 1809, a cause was tried in the Court of King's Bench, in which an upholsterer named Wright was plaintiff, and Wardle, the member, defendant. Mrs. Clarke, in support of the plaintiff, gave evidence with her accustomed precision and force. During the cross-examination, one of the counsel pertly accosted her thus: "Pray, madam, under whose protection are you now?" She replied, instantly, looking archly at the bench, "Lord Ellenborough's." His lordship smiled, and the equivoque of the truism convulsed the court with laughter.

But she at last seemed to grow wanton with success, and threatened to show up everybody who disappointed her expectations, or resisted her demands for money. On the 7th of February, 1814, in the Court of King's Bench, the attorney-general prayed the judgment of the court for a libel, written by her, and printed by W. Mitchell, against the Right Hon. W. Fitzgerald, Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer. It accused him of seducing his friend's wife, procuring the husband to be

sent to an unhealthy climate, and of matters not fit even to be mentioned in a public paper. Mr. Brougham, in support of Mrs. Clarke's affidavit, addressed the court in mitigation of punishment. This sent her to the Marshalsea for nine calendar months, — Mitchell escaping with four, — and for the edification of her admirers, past, present, and to come, Mr. Justice Le Blanc hoped this would be a warning to the world how they formed "hasty and imprudent connections." Mary Ann Clarke, when her time of confinement, nine months, expired, was bound to keep the peace for three years, in recognisances of £200 herself, and £100 for each of two sureties.

The best thing in the business is the impudence with which the female friend of this base woman quotes the awful language of South upon royal irregularities. "The sins of princes and priests are of a spreading and a reigning contagion, and though, naturally, they are no more than the acts of particular persons, yet, virtually and consequently, they are often the sins of a whole community. And if so, good God, what huge heaps of guilt must lie at such sinners' doors!

"For every person of note, power, and place, living in an open violation of any one of God's

laws, holds up a flag of defiance against Heaven, and calls in all about him to fight under his lewd banner against God and his express commands, and so, as it were, by a kind of homage and obedience, to be as vile and wicked as himself; and, when it comes to this, then all the villainies which were committed by others in the strength and encouragement of his devilish example, will be so personally charged upon his account, and, as a just debt, exacted from him to the utmost farthing."

This view of such offences was precisely that taken by his Majesty George III., and his uneasiness, under the imputations thrown out upon any member of his family, may, therefore, easily be imagined.

Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, came home from very active naval service with, I believe, no engagement of the heart, and he soon distinguished the charming actress of Drury Lane Theatre by unbounded admiration. It is to the credit of his taste that he did so. There is, however, a bias derived from profession which extends even to the sort of woman likely to strike our fancy. He has looked at the naval character with little discernment who does not feel that the gay-spirited, unaffected humour of Mrs. Jordan

carried the heart of a seaman by a *coup de main.* The tones of her voice, the neatness of her figure, the exhilaration of her laugh but reflect the images of his fancy when, in the watch of midnight, in the dreary howling of the gale, he cheers his lonely pace with the charms of his native land.

Inquiry, however, would not fail to acquaint him that Mrs. Jordan was generally supposed to be the wife of Mr. Ford, a barrister, the son of a proprietor of the theatre, though she retained as to the public still the theatrical name which she bore at York. The declared attachment of the prince weighed at first no more with her than to take the opportunity of ascertaining whether Mr. Ford was sincere in his devotion to her, in which case she thought herself every way entitled to his hand, and, in fact, even upon a mere worldly estimate of the matter, a desirable match, in possession of a positive and progressive fortune, the honourable result of superior, indeed unequalled talents. She at length required from Mr. Ford a definitive answer to the proposal of marriage, and, finding that he shrunk from the test, she told him distinctly that her mind was made up at least to one point: that, if she must choose between offers of protection, she would

certainly choose those that promised the fairest, but that, if he could think her worthy of being his wife, no temptation would be strong enough to detach her from him and her duties. Mr. Ford resigned her, I believe, with legal composure, and she accepted the terms held out by the duke, and devoted herself to his interests and his habits, his taste and domestic pleasures. Whoever has had the happiness of seeing them together at Bushy saw them surrounded by a family rarely equalled for personal and mental grace; they saw their happy mother an honoured wife in everything but the legal title, and uniformly spoke of the establishment at Bushy as one of the most enviable that had ever presented itself to their scrutiny.

But the actress began now to be assailed with the fiercest invectives as an unnatural mother, who, for the splendour of a royal connection, abandoned her children, the eldest of whom was not yet nine years old, and the two daughters by Ford still in the nursery. She made a very spirited and indignant public appeal upon this usage (I hope Ford did not in any manner stimulate it), which was, moreover, equally unjust to the noble duke as to herself, his Royal Highness having

ever honoured them with his countenance, and, in fact, treated them with the affection shown to his own family, until in one instance he was properly offended by conduct so violent, so persevering, and so shameful, that it became a question whether some other power did not point this lady to mischief, and enjoy the strife without mingling in the fray. At the proper time we shall state the steps taken by the duke's justice to ascertain the offending parties. During twenty years, Mrs. Jordan assures us, her happiness had never been interrupted by even the semblance of a quarrel.

At length, while she was acting at Cheltenham, a storm burst upon her totally unexpected, which is thus recorded by an actor, who was at the time in the theatre. She received a letter from his Royal Highness, desiring her to meet him at Maidenhead, where they were to bid each other farewell. Mrs. Jordan had concluded her engagement, but remained one night over to perform Nell, for the manager, Mr. Watson's benefit. It was in the afternoon of this very day she received the fatal letter. With that steady kindness that always distinguished her, she arrived at the theatre dreadfully weakened by a succession of fainting

fits. She, however, struggled on with Nell, until Jobson arrived at the passage where he has to accuse the conjurer of making her laughing drunk. When the actress here attempted to laugh, the afflicted woman burst into tears. Her Jobson with great presence of mind altered the text and exclaimed to her: "Why, Nell, the conjurer has not only made thee drunk, he has made thee crying drunk," thus covering her personal distress, and carrying her through the scene in character. After the performance, she was put into a travelling chariot in her stage dress, to keep her appointment with the royal duke, in a state of anguish easily to be conceived. What passed at the meeting I would not wish to detail. After allowing her due time to recover her spirits, and endeavour to do herself justice by making her statement to the regent, submitting herself entirely, to his judgment, and finally to the generous nature of the duke himself, she thus writes upon the subject of the separation to her confidential friend. She may now be pardoned for omitting to date the communication. But her mind is still amiable in its disappointments, and she turns herself unaffectedly to apologise for the rashness by which she has suffered.

LETTER I.

The Separation.

"BUSHY, Saturday.

"MY DEAR SIR: — I received yours and its enclosure safe this morning. My mind is beginning to feel somewhat reconciled to the shock and surprise it has lately received; for could you or the world believe that we never had, for twenty years, the semblance of a quarrel. But this is so well known in our domestic circle, that the astonishment is the greater. Money, money, my good friend, or the want of it, has, I am convinced, made him, at this moment, the most wretched of men; but having done wrong, he does not like to retract. But with all his excellent qualities, his domestic virtues, his love for his lovely children, what must he not at this moment suffer! His distresses should have been relieved before; but this is *entre nous*.

"All his letters are full of the most unqualified praise of my conduct; and it is the most heartfelt blessing to know that, to the best of my power, I have endeavoured to deserve it. I have received the greatest kindness and attention from the r——t, and every branch of the royal family,

who, in the most unreserved terms, deplore this melancholy business. The whole correspondence is before the r——t, and I am proud to add, that my past and present conduct has secured me a friend, who declares he never will forsake me. 'My forbearance,' he says, 'is beyond what he could have imagined!' But what will not a woman do, who is firmly and sincerely attached? Had he left me to starve, I never would have uttered a word to his disadvantage. I enclose you two other letters, and in a day or two you shall see more, the rest being in the hands of the r——t. And now, my dear friend, do not hear the D. of C. unfairly abused. He has done wrong, and he is suffering for it. But as far as he has left it in his own power, he is doing everything kind and noble, even to the distressing himself. I thank you sincerely for the friendly caution at the end of your letter, though I trust there will be no occasion for it; but it was kind and friendly, and as such I shall ever esteem it. I remain, dear sir,

"Yours sincerely, DORA JORDAN.

"These letters are for your eye alone." [1]

[1] The two letters enclosed by Mrs. Jordan. Returned to herself, faithfully obeying the condition attached to their communication.

LETTER II.

"Bushy, Monday.

"My dear Sir: — I should be sorry the letters I have enclosed to you were the only vouchers I could produce to the world, if necessary. But good God! what will not the world say? I received two letters this day telling me that I was accused of intriguing with the Duke of Cumberland!

"I am heartsick, and almost worn out with this cruel business, but I am,

"Very gratefully, yours,

"Dora Jordan."

LETTER III.

"Bushy, Thursday.

"Dear Sir: — Allow me to thank you for your kind attention to my request. We really live so much in the country, and so entirely within ourselves, that we might be dead and buried, without our friends knowing even that we had been ill.

"I have the heartfelt happiness of informing you that the duke is considerably better, though far from being as we could wish; however, his physicians have given his Royal Highness permis-

sion to go to town to-morrow. I have been confined ever since my return, owing to the fatigue and anxiety I have gone through. I fear it will be some time before I recover the very great shock I received. I hear there are to be two Drury Lanes; I believe just as likely as one.

"Yours ever,

"DORA JORDAN."

LETTER IV.

"CADOGAN PLACE, Thursday.

"MY DEAR SIR: — I fear I must have appeared unmindful of your many kindnesses, in having been such a length of time without writing to you; but really, till very lately, my spirits have been so depressed, that I am sure you will understand my feelings when I say it cost me more pain to write to those interested about me, than to a common acquaintance; but the constant kindness and attention I meet with from the duke, in every respect but personal interviews (and which depends as much on my feelings as his), has, in a great measure, restored me to my former health and spirits. Among many noble traits of goodness, he has lately added one more, that of exonerating me from my promise of not returning to

my profession. This he has done under the idea of its benefiting my health, and adding to my pleasures and comforts; and, though it is very uncertain whether I shall ever avail myself of this kindness, yet you, if you choose, are at liberty to make it known, whether publicly or privately.

"Yours ever, etc.

"DORA JORDAN.

"P. S. I wish I could see you, but it is such a long way for you to come."

LETTER V.

"ST. JAMES'S, Tuesday, 7th December.

"MY DEAR SIR:—I lose not a moment in letting you know that the Duke of Clarence has concluded and settled on me and his children the most liberal and generous provision; and I trust everything will sink into oblivion.

"Yours ever,

"DORA JORDAN."

Miss O'Neil

From the mezzotint by Smith

CHAPTER XI.

Three Distinct Sources of Calumny — A Union Suggested, and Dismissed — The Paternal Virtues of an Illustrious Character — Allusion to Mr. Barton's Letter — Subject Deferred — The Duke of Cumberland Accused — Mrs. Jordan's Return to the Stage — Her Reported Profits Exaggerated — Mrs. Siddons — Tacitus — Miss O'Neill, Character of That Lovely Actress — The Year 1814 Fatal to Mrs. Jordan — Mr. Alsop's Ruin; Goes Out to India with Lord Moira — His Lot There, His Conduct, and Death — The Defeat of All Her Hopes, as to Her Eldest Daughter, Followed by the Peril of Her Sons — Colonel Quentin's Court Martial — The Charges — His Conviction, and the Punishment of the Accusers — List of the Dismissed Unfortunates — George and Henry Fitzclarence — Contrive to Visit India — Singular and Impertinent Interference, on Their Account, with a King's Ship — Mrs. Jordan's Letter from Whitehaven — Liable to Additional Insurance on Alsop's Life — Gives Up Her Sheffield Engagement from Illness — Mrs. Jordan's Letter from Carlisle, 3d December, 1814 — Her Solemn Determination as to Her Daughter, Mrs. Alsop — Proposes a Retirement to Wales — The Two Sacrifices Submitting to Exile without a Murmur.

THE letters which have been laid before the reader will have given all the information that Mrs. Jordan thought herself at liberty to commit to paper. The sensible and dispassionate woman appears in every line of them.

It may be remarked on this occasion, that there were three distinct sources of calumny concurring to swell the tide of persecution which now assailed Mrs. Jordan, and the press was equally disposed to all the three, for they equally purposed mischief. The first was a pretty numerous set of scribblers, who, with the usually wanton ignorance of his conduct and merits, hated the duke, her illustrious friend; the second, a few writers connected with theatres, who, crediting every rumour with which provincial towns supplied them, attributed to the charming actress every description of sordid or loose attachment, who converted her very virtues into pitch, and, if she exerted herself to benefit any witness of her early progress in life, stated, like Iago, in the instance of Cassio and Desdemona:

> "That she repeal'd him for her body's lust."

A third were perhaps set on by persons of graver consideration, but not less doubtful morals, who do evil that good may come of it, and who, affecting a high sense of public virtue and regard for the family on the throne, and its members within the probability of succession, spared no pains to excite distrust or disgust in the royal person connected

with her, trusting to powerful aids in the embarrassments of his circumstances, which, with every disposition to frugality, had accumulated, to the noble duke's serious annoyance.

I have no slight reasons for thinking that one plan of relief was suggested which looked to a union with Miss Tylney Long, a matter which, it was represented, by the friendship of the regent, might easily be carried through Parliament by bill. If this was ever a matter for deliberation in the royal mind, I am quite sure it was rejected upon principle, and every notion of such a thing was soon closed, by the union of that wealthy heiress, in March, 1812, to William Wellesley Pole, Esq., the son of Lord Maryborough. In fact, twenty years of sympathy and truth leave always strong impressions upon the mind; and I have no doubt full justice has always been done to the attachment of Mrs. Jordan, by the royal personage to whom it was borne. The demands of high situation are often imperative, and they must be obeyed, but the man must be satisfied as well as the prince; and what father has ever more steadily responded to the claims of his children than the Duke of Clarence? Without too much presumption, we may, perhaps, attribute to such a conduct, that as

his early day was gladdened by all that could amuse and fascinate, we find his latter period embellished by all the virtues that either lead or console the progress through the remainder of the journey.

Of the particular provision made for Mrs. Jordan, and the daughters under her care, I shall content myself here with saying, that it was undoubtedly liberal, and, as she seems herself to think, rather larger than his Royal Highness's very confined circumstances in prudence might warrant. But every satisfaction on this head will be given by Mr. Barton's letter, in the year 1824, when the last scene had been shut upon the inimitable subject of it, and all that could then be done was to show that to her illustrious friend no part of her misfortunes could candidly be imputed. But our astonishment will not at all be lessened by this admission.

> "Can such things be,
> And overcome us like a summer cloud,
> Without our special wonder?"

The letter from Mrs. Jordan upon the subject of the disagreement mentions her forbearance, and that it was highly applauded by a great personage; nor is it unlikely that she might have placed some

part of her fortune at the temporary disposition of her noble friend. Everything of a pecuniary nature, however, it will be shown by adequate proof, was settled, with interest, up to the very hour of adjustment, and Mrs. Jordan's receipt in full taken by the gentleman commissioned to make the arrangement.

I had almost forgotten the accusation to which Mrs. Jordan alludes, of her intriguing with his Royal Highness of Cumberland. That royal duke has long been a mark for every description of poisoned shot, and I sincerely believe was utterly incapable of violating the confidence implied in fraternal relation. I am little likely to concur in the measures of such a man as Mr. O'Connell; nor will I inquire with what view, or what hope he might announce an intended motion on the subject of the illustrious duke. Of such views or hopes men of different parties will entertain very opposite notions; but I can see no impropriety in sifting all the matters that have been for a length of time insinuated against him, thinking, as I do, that, some indiscretions set off his head, the royal personage would find no difficulty in setting himself right with every respectable mind in the country. I have liberty to regret, however, and

I most certainly shall always do so, that any part of the royal family, by the pernicious error of residence in a foreign country, should have been exposed to the chance, at least of contracting habits alien from those of his countrymen, and be, therefore, sometimes suspected of feelings, or it may be principles, not quite in unison with those of the public in general.

Mrs. Jordan availed herself of the permission she had received to indulge her love for the stage, by the acceptance of numerous lucrative engagements, and however changed we in the capital might think her in person, or however lowered the charm about her by the loss of what youth alone can entirely complete, her engagements, the very last year of her acting here, were estimated confidently to reach the amazing sum of £7,000. However, thinking, as I do, that the learned person who states it was misinformed, and believing such profits impossible to the power of performing, or that of paying it, in the provinces, I shall simply point out that she must, when turned of fifty, have acted a hundred and forty nights in the course of one year, and been regularly paid fifty pounds every night, to acquire the sum set down. Nothing but a monster in art, on its first

show, ever did anything like this. But not to estimate sterling talent in this way, I can readily believe that Mrs. Jordan did all that could be fairly expected; and it was highly necessary, for demands upon her were congesting in thick clouds and darkness, which no individual success could possibly meet, unless in the one favoured individual that success had been a balance for the total failure of nearly every individual connected with her, by nature or alliance, which burst at length upon her in the year 1814, and finally destroyed her fortune and her life.

Mrs. Jordan had always talked of retiring from her profession with Mrs. Siddons. As she was considerably younger than that lady, we may suppose such a notion the fond parallelism of excellence, an arrangement of excusable vanity that would at one moment withdraw the rival sisters, Melpomene and Thalia, from the British stage.

"I can give no certain judgment," says one of the wisest among the ancients, "whether the affairs of mortal men are governed by fate and immutable necessity, or have their course and change by chance and fortune." I need not be ashamed of the knot which Tacitus could not untie; but, whatever the Jordan or the Siddons intended by

retiring, the certain or uncertain powers mentioned by the great historian defeated the mighty resolution to leave the British stage in total darkness. From the sister isle, a young lady lighted upon our coast, who fully replaced the tragic half of our loss in everything but her grandeur. I allude to the appearance of Miss O'Neill on the 6th of October, 1814, at Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of Juliet. A week after this she acted Belvidera, the true touchstone of female passion, and followed this by Isabella. In tenderness and grief she at least equalled Mrs. Siddons in her first year. For reasons which I need not, I believe, here mention, I shall quote from a writer who has run something like a comparison between these two greatest supporters of the serious muse. "It is not easy," says this critic, "to convey an idea of an actress, who has no peculiar defects, and whose excellence is nearly uniform. She is, by far, the most impressive actress we have seen since Mrs. Siddons; nor do we think that the expression of domestic and feminine distress can well be carried farther. As she has been compared (and with some appearance of reason) to Mrs. Siddons, we shall attempt to describe the dlfference between them. This is scarcely greater

in the form, features, and tone of voice than in the expression of the internal workings of the mind. In Mrs. Siddons passion was combined with lofty imagination and commanding intellect: Miss O'Neill owes everything to extreme sensibility. In her Belvidera and Isabella we see the natural feelings of tenderness and grief worked up to madness by accumulated misfortunes. She gives herself up entirely to the impression of circumstances; is borne along the tide of passion, and absorbed in her sufferings; she realises all that is suggested by the progress of the story, and answers the utmost expectation of the beholder. She does not lift the imagination out of itself. Every nerve is strained; her frame is convulsed, her breath suspended, her forehead knit together; Fate encloses her around, and seizes on his struggling victim. Nothing can be more natural or more affecting than her whole conception of those parts in which she has appeared. It is those reaches of the soul, in which it looks down on its sufferings, in which it rises superior to nature and fortune, and gathers strength and grandeur from its despair, that gives such majesty and power to the acting of Mrs. Siddons. She seems formed for scenes of terror and agony, and

fit to contend with them, and then only to possess the entire plenitude and expansion of her being."

Miss O'Neill had commenced her dramatic career as early as her twelfth year, like Mrs. Jordan, with the advantage, however, that her father was manager of the company at Drogheda; so that the three greatest actresses of our age and country inherited their professional talent. Indeed, what course is so natural, as that which supplies the nightly excitement to distinction, and, without difficulty, ministers opportunity to desire? It is always difficult to keep the children of actors from the stage. Old R. Kemble could not do it, much as he tried; no, not in one single instance, male or female.

But the year 1814 was, as to Mrs. Jordan, crowded with scenes of every variety. In this year her eldest daughter's husband, Mr. Alsop, completed the work of riot and extravagance. The only thing that could be done was to get permission for his attending upon Lord Moira to India, nominally as an under secretary, but, I believe, without any actual appointment. On his departure we may suppose the poor mother did her utmost, and concerted an arrangement for her daughter until Mr. Alsop should feel himself es-

tablished at Calcutta, and write home desiring her to follow him to India. This he never did; he, however, obtained the post of civil magistrate at Calcutta, and held it till his death. The rest of his story is soon told; he left, as I learn, three children by a white woman with whom he was intimate, and, when they lost their father, a subscription was made for them at Calcutta. As to Mrs. Alsop, her thoughts and wishes bent themselves to another direction.

All that Mrs. Jordan could do under such distressing circumstances was to insure Mr. Alsop's life, and that, for everybody's sake, she was obliged to find money for. To be widowed without death, and beggared in spite of industry, were among the extraordinaries of her life. The associations of language lead me from the last word to the army.

This wreck of all her hopes as to the success of her eldest daughter was followed by the disaster that attended her two gallant sons, who had been serving in the 10th Royal Hussars, and who had concurred in that censure of Colonel George Quentin, their commanding officer, which produced his court martial on the 17th of October, 1814, and continued by adjournments to the 1st of November following.

In compliment to Mrs. Jordan, who calls her two sons "sacrificed young men" on this occasion, I shall, with as much brevity as possible, just exhibit the charges in substance, the sentence of the court that tried the prisoner, and the prince regent's revision and opinion of the whole business. There were four charges:

1st. That the regiment being, on the 10th day of January, 1814, foraging in the valley of Macoy in France, the said colonel, neglecting and abandoning his duty as being in command, did not make the necessary and proper arrangements to ensure success, though directed so to do by the brigade order of the 9th January, 1814, leaving some of the divisions without order or support when attacked by the enemy, whereby some men and horses of the regiment were taken prisoners, and the safety of such divisions hazarded. Such conduct evincing great professional incapacity and tending to lessen the confidence of the soldier, and being disgraceful to his character as an officer, prejudicial to good order and military discipline, and contrary to the articles of war.

2d. That on the 28th of February, 1814, the day after the battle of Orthes, in front of the village of Hagleman, department of Landes, in

France, the regiment being engaged with the enemy, the said Colonel Quentin did not, either previously or during the action, make such attempts as he ought to have done by his own personal exertions and example to coöperate with or support the advanced divisions, thereby hazarding their safety, and compromising as before, etc.

3d. Substantively the same charge of neglect of his duty on the 10th day of April, 1814, during the battle of Tholouse, in France, leaving some of the divisions without orders while under the fire of the enemy, etc.

4th. Allowing a relaxed discipline, by which the reputation of the regiment suffered in the opinion of the commander of the forces and of the lieutenant-general commanding the cavalry; conveyed through the proper channels, etc.

The sentence of the court martial was indeed a right courtly production. They find Colonel Quentin guilty of so much of the first charge as imputes to him the having "neglected his duty as commanding officer on the 10th of January by leaving some of the divisions without orders when attacked by the enemy," but acquit him of the rest of the charge.

Now as all the rest of this charge is inferential,

we must presume that to leave troops without orders is not disgraceful to a commanding officer, nor any mark of incapacity. To have, in consequence of your neglect, your men and horses made prisoner by the enemy, does not lessen the confidence of the soldier in your skill and courage, is not prejudicial to good order and discipline, and by no means contrary to the articles of war.

Of the second and third charges the court acquits the colonel.

Of the fourth, relaxed discipline, they find him guilty of allowing it to exist in the regiment while under his command, but having before been censured, they do not think proper to increase the reprimand. And the result of all is, that the colonel be reprimanded on the first charge, in such manner as H. R. H. the Commander-in-Chief be pleased to direct.

On behalf of his Majesty, however, it appears "the greatest was behind:" the confederates are admonished of the severe responsibility attaching to those who become accusers of their superior — they are unmindful by it of what they owe to the first principles of their profession, by forming an opinion of their commander's personal conduct, which neither their general experience of the

service, nor their knowledge of the alleged facts could justify. The merciful interpretation of their conduct attributes it to inadvertency in some, and inexperience in others; so they were all graciously kicked out of the 10th Hussars, without their swords, and ordered to hold themselves ready to join such other regiments of cavalry as they should immediately be appointed to. But I will copy the names of the offending officers on this occasion — assuredly with no intention to injure them:

Col. Charles Palmer; Lieut.-Col. G. J. Roberts; Capts. J. R. Lloyd, B. N. Harding, S. H. Stuart, George Fitzclarence, J. Smith, E. P. Turner, R. Goveen, C. Synge, Lord A. W. Hill, Edward Fox Fitzgerald; Lieuts. H. Marquis of Worcester, Charles Eversfield, H. Somerset, G. Wombwell, C. Wyndham, H. Seymour, Henry Fitzclarence, A. F. Berkley, J. H. Powell, J. Jackson, J. A. Richardson, J. C. Green; Cornet R. B. Paliser.

The Hon. Major Howard was ordered to take the command of the 10th Royal Hussars until it shall be resumed by Colonel Quentin.

I leave this business without a word of comment. Mrs. Jordan's two sons were permitted to seek their fortunes in India, for having presumed to form an opinion as to the duties of command-

ing officers; which duties, it appeared, had been rendered more arduous by the want of coöperation in the corps. Even when they were sent out to India, a note accompanied them from M'M——, begging that the strictest discipline, not to say severity, should be exercised toward them, in consequence of their share in the business of the 10th Hussars. The person addressed stated in answer, that he "had received the colonel's letter, and that he should have returned it with the contempt it deserved, but that he chose to retain it, that he might have it in his power to expose him, should such unfair and offensive conduct be repeated, and that no British officers would be dictated to in their line of conduct with those under their command." This brave man has been the warm friend of the family ever since.

As to the Insurance on Alsop's Life.

"WHITEHAVEN, 11 Nov., 1814.

"MY DEAR ———: — This moment only have I received both your letters; therefore you will not be surprised that I grew uneasy. The other half of the check you will have received by this time; so far all is right. It was from Howard's own mouth that I got the disagreeable informa-

tion, that I was liable to pay the additional insurance on Alsop's life. I need not tell you, my dear ———, how much obliged I should be to you, if you would regularly arrange this very disagreeable and unfortunate business for me. I trust that the heavy addition will be prevented, and I am truly sorry that you have not been comfortable. What has been the matter?

"I have been very ill, but do not let them know of it at home! So much so, that I was obliged to give up my engagement at Sheffield, after playing only one night, which was doubly unlucky from the prospect there was of great success. I lose £150 by it. I am doing very well here, but the theatre is not large enough. God bless you all! Your affectionate,

"D. J."

"P. S. I believe I shall go to Edinburgh — but Newcastle first."

Relative to Mrs. Alsop.

"CARLISLE, Saturday, Dec. 3, 1814.

"I was prevented by illness both of body and mind, the last time I wrote, from saying one-half of what it is necessary should be now perfectly

understood with regard to Mrs. Alsop. You say that, in order to assist her, you must expend £30 or £40. I am sorry for it, as it will not be in my power to reimburse you, and trust the love and duty you owe to your own family will interfere, and point out to you the injustice of it. You talk of Mrs. A.'s desire to go to her husband. If it were affection or duty that prompted her, I should pity, though even in that case, it would at this time be out of my power to forward her wishes; but this is not the case, as you know. I have at present melancholy, but far better claims on me — claims that, to my bitter remorse, I have almost deprived myself of the means of affording to two amiable children, by having lavished them on one. She never could have been sensible of the sacrifice, or I should not have met with such ingratitude. For the last time, dear ———, shall this subject ever employ my pen, and I trust you will give it the attention I feel due to it. In the event of Mrs. A.'s going abroad, I must sink another £100 per year to the £260 (independent of the additional insurance on A.'s life), making in all near £400 a year. He has no employment, and how will he support her? and am I to have the additional misery of thinking that she may be

starving in a foreign land? I therefore, for the last time, most solemnly declare to her, through you, that these are the last and only propositions that shall ever be offered. That she shall go to her uncle in Wales, when I will pay £40 a year for her board and lodging, allowing her £50 a year for clothes, till such time her husband may be able to maintain her abroad, when every exertion shall be made to send her out. If she refuses this, I here swear, by the most heart-breaking oath that presents itself to my tortured mind, that 'may I never again see those two sacrificed young men, if I ever (if possible) think of her again, as a child that has any claim on me.' And I shall be led to doubt the affection of any one, who may, by a mistaken motive, endeavour to make me break an oath so seriously and solemnly taken. If she has an atom of feeling, and wishes to regain any part of my affection, she will instantly agree to this; if not, the £90 a year shall be regularly paid to her so long as I have it to give. Let her not look on this as a banishment; let her look on the fate of two gallant young men, submitting to a cruel exile without a murmur, whatever they may feel. I shall send a plan to Mrs. Williams, and shall be under the disagreeable necessity, my dear

———, of withdrawing from you the little addition I could have wished to continue to you. When everything is adjusted, it will be impossible for me to remain in England. I shall therefore go abroad, appropriating as much as I can spare of the remainder of my income, to pay my debts. And now, my dear ———, for the last time on this cruel subject, adieu! I write this from a sleepless pillow. God bless you all! I shall be home by the 15th or 16th. I have been obliged to give up all my engagements. Love to all.

"Your affectionate,

"D. J.

"For the little time I shall be in C. Place, after the departure of all happiness, tell dear Lucy that I will pay her three guineas per week, for myself, Miss S., and the two servants, finding our own tea, sugar, and wine. Be silent on the subject of my going abroad, or it may embarrass me."

Relative to Mrs. Alsop.

"Carlisle, Sunday, Dec. 4, 1814.

"My dear ———:—When I received your letter relative to Fanny I immediately wrote to

George without endeavouring to prejudice him in the smallest degree, but was not at all surprised at the enclosed answer, which you may show or not as you shall judge best. You have, of course, received my last. I will spare what I can to send her to Wales respectable, and enable her uncle to receive her comfortably. Whenever Alsop is in a situation to provide for or maintain her abroad, I will exert my utmost to send her to him.

"All personal discussions on such subjects are doubly painful, therefore, my dear ———, to prevent such I take the opportunity of repeating this by letter; and, in future, I have only to refer Fanny to my last letter to you. If she and Mrs. Williams should prefer living in any cheap part of France, they may do it to more advantage. It is very probable that I shall find it necessary to live there the best part of every year. Dear George's account of everybody in C. Place gives me great pleasure. I could wish Mrs. Alsop and Mrs. Williams would make up their minds before I return. I shall be back, if those dear boys go soon, by the 15th or 16th. God bless you all!

"Your affectionate,

[Signed] "D. J."

Capt. George Fitzclarence to Mr. Jordan.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

[*Extract.*]

"LONDON, December 2, 1814.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER: — Nothing is as yet settled when we start, but we are to go out in Admiral Burlton's ship, who goes out to take the command in India. I am now certain to join Lord Moira, but, if anything is said about it, the Duke of York will give me positive orders to join my horrid regiment. I really think we go out in the most happy way, and ought, if we choose to stay long enough, to make our fortunes. My father, poor soul, has suffered much, but is now better; his anxiety actually made him very ill, but both go out in the same ship, which is a great comfort. Although we are a great way off each other (seven hundred miles), yet I hope, should any good situation offer, to bring Henry to Calcutta. The girls have made up their minds to it very well. M—— did not mention anything about Fanny, but I cannot take her on board the king's ship. It will be impossible; I would not shackle myself with her. MacMahon gives me the most certain assurances of Alsop being provided for. I will do

all I can, but I cannot take Fanny out with us. It will cost £3,000 to get us out to India — where is all this to come from?"

From Mrs. Jordan.

"CARLISLE, December 5, 1814.

"MY DEAR ———: — I shall be home by January 15th or 16th. Truly sorry am I to be under the necessity of disturbing dear Dora; sooner than do so, if I was not very unwell, I would take lodgings.

"The enclosed to the gen—l[1] contains a proposition, similar to the one I made to you, concerning the house, which, if it does not appear eligible to him, I shall dispose of as soon as possible, and, if not able to follow my profession, I shall immediately go abroad. God bless you!

"D. J.

"P. S. I trust in God you will exert yourself in pointing out to Fanny the absolute necessity of her prompt compliance with the proposal, in which case she shall ever find me her mother and friend."

[1] General Hawker, her son-in-law.

CHAPTER XII.

Sir Jonah Barrington's Allusion to a Distressing Event, Which He Declines to Relate — The Person Alluded to Heard in His Own Defence.

THE reader will have weighed the reasons in a former chapter why I inclined to question the astonishing profits of Mrs. Jordan in her profession, during her last year in England. However, Sir Jonah Barrington, estimating them at £7,000, thus follows up his statement of their amount. "The malicious representations, therefore, of her having been left straitened in pecuniary circumstances, were literally fabulous; for to the very moment of her death she remained in full possession of all the means of comfort, — nay, if she chose it, of luxury and splendour. Why, therefore, she emigrated, pined away, and expired in a foreign country (of whose language she was ignorant, and in whose habits she was wholly unversed), with every appearance of necessity, is also considered a mystery by those unacquainted with the cruel and dis-

astrous circumstances which caused that unfortunate catastrophe. It is not by my pen that miserable story shall be told. It was a transaction wherein her royal friend had directly or indirectly no concern, nor did it in any way spring out of that connection. She had, in fact, only to accuse herself of benevolence, confidence, and honour. To those demerits, and to the worse than ingratitude of others, she fell a lingering, broken-hearted victim."

It is impossible to make either a truer or more objectionable statement than the preceding. And it resulted from a wish to relieve a most generous and noble mind from the aspersions cast upon it. But Sir Jonah goes further, and in very delicate language acquits her sons, by the connection referred to, of any share in the event which he so properly deplores. There is a mode, of which Sir Jonah has availed himself with professional skill, of declining to tell a story, at the very time when you are hinting the whole of it, and revealing the person whom you accuse, without naming him, by describing sufficiently those whom you intend to acquit. He has withdrawn his noble friend and his children; he has told us of "the punctilious honour and integrity of General Hawker," who

had married one of Mrs. Jordan's daughters, by Sir Richard Ford. In 1827 Sir Jonah, and everybody else who was at all interested, knew that Mr. Alsop, who married the eldest, or Miss Jordan, had died in India, and that the unfortunate and misled woman herself had perished miserably in America. He, therefore, in fact, most distinctly pointed out the offender, whom he accuses of betraying confidence, forfeiting his honour, and repaying benevolence with ruin.

The gentleman thus shadowed out, rather than drawn, is unknown personally to me, and will probably remain so — he must bear as much of this accusation as he cannot throw off. He once made a statement of that miserable story which Sir Jonah's pen would not tell, and submitted it to a liberal and enlightened friend, in whose opinion he wished to stand clear, at least of everything but his misfortunes. The reader shall, in a few minutes, have it in substance as I perused it.

Before his explanation is read, I must take the liberty to remark upon the luxury and splendour, of which a picture has been drawn by Sir Jonah Barrington, and which, as far as the royal bounty was or could be made applicable to the dear lady's use, there is not the slightest reason to question.

Sir Jonah has told us of £7,000 made in her last professional tours, a noble addition to the splendid fortune which almost unexampled success had, we might fancy, been accumulating through her life. But all seems to have been checked and withered away (but the bounty of her illustrious friend) by the conduct of the gentleman once so dear in her esteem. May we venture to inquire what had become of that vast fortune which we have vainly fancied to be a growing bank and fund of provision for herself and her children? Suppose it could have been established that he had engaged Mrs. Jordan's name and credit to the amount of £5,000, what was to hinder her from "paying the bonds thrice," if once would not have sufficed, rather than becoming a fugitive in a foreign land, and dying of dejection and alarm as much as of disease? But we have, from her own pen, a detail of her circumstances before she knew anything of the embarrassments of the person in question, and a most astonishing exhibition it is. I use her own words, that no colouring of mine may seem to deepen the disastrous picture.

"When everything is adjusted,[1] it will be impossible for me to remain in England; I shall

[1] As to Mrs. Alsop — see her letter, p. 274.

therefore go abroad, appropriating as much as I can spare of the remainder of my income to pay my debts.

"Be silent on the subject of my going abroad, or it may embarrass me."

At this time she was so little aware of the difficulties shortly to excite her attention, that she absolutely apologises to the person for withdrawing a slight addition she had been happy to make to his income, in order to carry into effect the arrangements proposed, for the salvation, indeed, of her daughter Alsop. How, it will be asked, did she come into such unlooked-for straitness, as to what should have rendered her independent even of royal bounty? Who had swallowed up the recompense of her glorious talent, the growth from the stock of her own industry? Her sons-in-law had not been half paid the intended portions of their wives. But all her connections, of every degree, were her annuitants.

Without meaning offence, her sons in the army, young men of high spirit, and involved in some unpleasant circumstances occasionally, might appeal to a mother's indulgence, and, I am sure, always found the appeal answered. There is something in the military profession peculiarly

dear to the fancy of a parent; the warmth of her expressions, when she names them, shows the ascendency they possessed, in a mind uniformly affectionate and liberal. I am persuaded that she would consider fortune, at all times, as a trivial oblation to either their gallantry or their love.

However, at length we find a hint that something has created annoyance in the quarter alluded to. "I am truly sorry," says this excellent woman, "that you have not been comfortable; what has been the matter?" When the explanation had been given, she seems to have granted the securities required, and thus replies to a letter from the gentleman interested.

"My ever dear ———:—I thank your kind and considerate letter, and reap all the consolation from it that my present melancholy situation will allow of. I enclose the notes. I have just written to dear ———.

"God bless you all!

"D. J."

(Without date.)

Having thus prepared the way for the disclosure of these unhappy matters of business, I state them upon the authority to which I have sufficiently referred in a former page.

AUTHENTIC STATEMENT.

"In the autumn of 1815, Mrs. Jordan was called upon, very unexpectedly, to redeem some securities given by her, for money raised to assist a near relative. The cause of this aid was the pressure of matters purely of a domestic nature. The call upon her was sudden, and certainly unexpected; and, not finding herself in a situation to advance the £2,000 claimed, she withdrew herself to France, deputing a friend in England to make every necessary arrangement for paying all the creditors as soon as possible. At the time of Mrs. Jordan's quitting England, she was in the receipt of an annual income of upwards of £2,000, paid with the greatest punctuality quarterly, without demur, drawback, or impediment, and so continued to the hour of her death. Up to April, 1816, Mrs. Jordan's drafts on Messrs. Coutts and Co. were duly paid; never for a moment could she have felt the griping hand of poverty.

"I can positively assert that never, during her lifetime, was one shilling paid toward liquidating the securities in question, nor was it urgent that it should be done, because the creditors, for the most part personal friends, well knew the upright

principles they had to depend upon; nor were they ignorant that the transcendent talents of this gifted being were always sure to receive a munificent reward from the hands of the public, whenever she should again seek their assistance. And in the fruits of this they were sure of participating. Her protracted stay abroad was occasioned by untoward circumstances, over which the principals had no control.

"Up to the hour of Mrs. Jordan's leaving England she had been living under the same roof with the relative with whom she was concerned in the securities alluded to. Reciprocal acts of kindness, mutual confidence in all domestic matters, and many points of private affairs tended to create in Mrs. Jordan's mind a reliance upon this person. Never for a moment, during the six years that her daughter had been married, had Mrs. Jordan reason to doubt his sincere affection or his veracity, nor did she doubt them when she left England.

"Immediately upon the derangement of Mrs. Jordan's affairs, and before she left England, a statement of all the claims to which she was liable was made out, together with a list of the persons holding her bonds and bills of acceptance.

The result of which convinced Mrs. Jordan that her liabilities did not much exceed £2,000, and that the claimants were, one and all, the personal friends of the parties.

"In August, 1815, Mrs. Jordan left England for France, with the intention of remaining away some ten days, the time computed necessary to place matters in that state as to render her person legally secure from arrest. Her affairs were placed in the hands of persons well informed in every particular thereof, as of all other matters connected with her life. Mrs. Jordan was well aware that the creditors were only anxious to have their claims placed in a secure state, and that they were willing to give every accommodation required. She was also aware that her fellow sufferer had given up a considerable portion of his annual income, and she felt that her representative in England could, in one hour's time, settle any doubtful point that might arise during the arrangement. In short, she knew that no impediment existed. Consequently, when she found that month after month elapsed without anything being finally settled, her mind became troubled.

"When Mrs. Jordan left England she took with

her as a companion a lady who had for some years previous been employed in superintending the education of Mrs. Jordan's younger children, and who had for the last twelve months been Mrs. Jordan's constant attendant. This person came to England in January, 1816, to receive and take to Mrs. Jordan her quarter's income, then in Messrs. Coutts's house. From the moment of her arrival in England until she quitted it she pursued a line of conduct toward the daughters of Mrs. Jordan (then residing in Mrs. Jordan's house) that was offensive beyond measure: she peremptorily, and in a most insulting manner, called upon the person concerned with Mrs. Jordan in the affair of the bills and bonds to make oath that Mrs. Jordan was not liable to any claims beyond those of which she already knew; the demand was accompanied with base insinuations. Justly doubting this to be really the wish of Mrs. Jordan, and irritated at the circumstances attending the demand, it was refused; and on the same day this lady returned to France, and there is little doubt but then, for the first time, Mrs. Jordan did become 'apprehensive.'

"During her stay in England the lady alluded to informed two of Mrs. Jordan's daughters that

Mrs. Jordan's future place of residence in France was to be kept a profound secret from them, and that all letters from them to their mother must be sent through a third person, and directed to Mrs. James instead of Mrs. Jordan; thus, from that time, all such communications first passed through the hands of a person who might withdraw Mrs. Jordan's confidence and affection from those most interested in getting her back to England. It is necessary to revert to the verbal refusal given to take the oath demanded, because it has been made a point of much importance as connected with Mrs. Jordan's state of feeling, in consequence of the publication made in the *Morning Chronicle* of 26th January, 1824, of a letter of Mrs. Jordan's bearing date 16th January, 1816.

"Mrs. Jordan's letter must have been written immediately after the return of the above mentioned lady to France, and there is great reason to think that then only, for the first time, did a feeling of apprehension of further demands awake in Mrs. Jordan's mind, and the fatal step of cutting off the source of communication prevented altogether, or perhaps only delayed, the receipt of a letter, written by the person refusing to take the oath, on the very same day, to say that he was

truly willing to do whatever Mrs. Jordan should herself require, and that the oath should be taken whenever she wrote to say it was her wish.

"There can be no question that the mind of this great woman had been long and grievously oppressed; nor will this be any matter of wonder when a retrospect is taken of her eventful life. Who can deny that, in the greatest flow of her prosperity, she had many bitter memorials that good and ill will mingle in every human condition? The greatest pleasure that acquiring wealth could bestow upon Mrs. Jordan, was its affording her the power of shedding greater happiness around her. Can there be a severer censure on her memory than to think that pecuniary difficulties, even weighty (which hers never were), could for any length of time have depressed a mind, such as hers, in its perfect state?

"I have thrown this statement together in the hope that you will deem it satisfactory, and remain, my dear sir, most sincerely yours."

CHAPTER XIII.

Some Reflections on the Explanation Preceding — Violent Conduct of Mrs. Alsop — The Duke's Displeasure — Mrs. Alsop on the Stage — Her Appearance in Rosalind — Her Supporters — Compared with Her Enchanting Mother — Mrs. Jordan at Boulogne — Col. Frederick Fitzclarence's Generous Letter — The Mother Writes to the Unfortunate — Retires to Versailles and St. Cloud — Her Residence Described — The Author's Comments — Her Growing Illness and Anxiety — Her Fancied and Real Death — Burial and Inscription upon Her Grave.

E must leave the explanation of Mrs. Jordan's near relative to its effect. That people with clashing interests should see things in different lights, cannot surprise. Two families are seldom bound together by one common tie. It was very natural that Mrs. Jordan's daughters, with whom she had been living, should wish to possess her wholly, and there might be an impression elsewhere that her happiness would be better secured by her removal from their influence. With respect to her companion while in France, there seems no reason to question her affection toward the admirable lady;

and it must always be recollected that in no way was she accessory to her exile, and but complied, where a wish was a command, with the desire of her noble and honoured master, when she accompanied Mrs. Jordan. The deepest offence given by this lady may surely be excused, from her zeal: she thought her friend injured, and saw her to be unhappy; it is proved by Mrs. Jordan's own letter to Mr. Barton, that the testimony, on oath, however galling, was really required by herself.

But the conduct of one of her daughters has been already observed to have excited great displeasure in a quarter from which her parent was to derive the very means of assisting herself. I allude to a series of violent and virulent letters, which being written by Mrs. Alsop under the roof of Mr. March, were suspected to be composed with his privity, and, probably, concurrence; but the justice and temper of the great personage assailed did not launch displeasure on supposition. By his command Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Barton called upon that gentleman, and appeared to be perfectly satisfied with his vindication of himself. He had, he assured them, remonstrated with Mrs. Alsop, repeatedly, and at length insisted that such

missiles should no longer proceed out of his house. Upon which she left it one evening altogether, and assumed a conduct which cannot but be deeply regretted. It had already been anticipated in one of her mother's letters, which implies a doubt of her real wish to rejoin her husband, or, what might be of more moment, her sincere attachment to him.

This was put out of all doubt by the condition in which Mrs. Alsop appeared before a London audience as an actress, on the 18th of October, 1815. It will be remembered that her husband embarked for India the year before. Thus a critic of the time spake with more wisdom than he was aware of, when he wrote the following sentence as to her Rosalind. "Of her figure it would be unjust at present to speak. She appears to be far advanced in that state in which ladies wish to be who love their lords. This was certainly a circumstance operating considerably to her disadvantage." I did not myself see her the first night, and when I did, found that my best course was to close my eyes, and allow my ears for a few seconds to deceive me:

> "For so to interpose a little ease,
> Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise."

The late Mr. Hazlitt, for whose powers of mind I entertain much respect, had seen her, and has left her talent and person discriminated from those of her mother, in terms that express actual feeling, and admit of no improvement.

"The truth is, Mrs. Alsop is a very nice little woman, who acts her part very sensibly and cleverly, and with a certain degree of arch humour; but no more like her mother than we to Hercules. Mrs. Jordan's excellences were all natural to her. It was not as an actress, but as herself, that she charmed every one. Nature had formed her in her most prodigal humour, and when Nature is in the humour to make a woman all that is delightful, she does it most effectually. Her face, her tones, her manner, were irresistible. Her smile had the effect of sunshine, and her laugh did one good to hear it. Her voice was eloquence itself. It seemed as if her heart was always at her mouth. She was all gaiety, openness and good nature. She rioted in her fine animal spirits, and gave more pleasure than any other actress, because she had the greatest spirit of enjoyment in herself.

"Mrs. Alsop has nothing luxurious about her, and Mrs. Jordan was nothing else. Her voice is

clear and articulate, but not rich or flowing. In person she is small, and her face is not prepossessing. Her delivery of the speeches was correct and excellent, as far as it went, but without much richness or power. Lively good sense is what she really possesses. She also sang the 'Cuckoo Song' very pleasingly."

As she had a tale of hardship to tell, this lady was listened to, and her patrons were among the admirers of her mother, and those who only opposed her mother's friend. The latter even visited Covent Garden Theatre to support this daughter of Drury. She acted Rosalind five times, and the Country Girl once — and that, probably, was as much as she could venture before Christmas.

We have now arrived at the convenient place in our narrative to follow Mrs. Jordan to her temporary retirement in France, and we are conducted to it by Sir Jonah Barrington, one of the fondest and most intelligent of her admirers. She first established herself at Boulogne-sur-mer, and selected a cottage at Marquetra, about a quarter of a mile from the gate of the fortress. The cottage was very small, but neat, commodious, and of a cheerful aspect. A flower and fruit garden of

corresponding dimensions, and a little paddock (comprising less than half an acre), formed her demesne. In an adjoining cottage resided her old landlady, Madame Ducamp, who, it seems, was in a state of competence, and in her character an original.

Upon Sir Jonah's visiting the spot subsequently, to him classic ground, he listened to the recollections of the landlady, and the naïve descriptions of Agnes, her servant, and appears to be a convert, with ourselves, to the superior interest which the Frenchwoman excites in her narrations, and the skill with which she files her exclamations and sympathies to the feelings and wishes of those who listen to her. The attachment of these two females to Mrs. Jordan was magnificent, if their words might be taken; and, in celebrating the heart and kind feeling of others, the French lady, of all women, cannot be supposed to put her own entirely out of either sight or hearing.

"I thought it, by the bye," says Sir Jonah, "very extraordinary, that neither the mistress nor the maid said a word about any attendant of Mrs. Jordan, even although it was not till long after that I heard of Colonel Hawker and Miss Ketchley having accompanied her from England."

This lady's name was not, as he writes it, Ketchley, but Sketchley, a much better one had this been a travelling companion on a tour of amusement. How she escaped the recollection of Madame Ducamp and her *aide*, I cannot imagine. She certainly was an important person in this Continental visit of Mrs. Jordan, and seemed to take the lead in a variety of arrangements, which growing indisposition, both of body and mind, disabled the dear woman from making for herself.

While they resided at Boulogne, Mrs. Jordan, under the prescribed address to Mrs. James, received the following letter from her son, the present Col. Frederick Fitzclarence. It is so frank, so full of generous sympathy for the unfortunates, whose kindness to the whole family he could not forget, that it is worth all the studied composition in the world.

Colonel F. Fitzclarence to Mrs. Jordan.

[*Copy.*]

"My dear Mother: — My dear Sophia[1] has been very low-spirited since she received my ever-dear Dora's letter, and she took the earliest oppor-

[1] His sister; no doubt attracted to Paris by the extraordinary events of 1815.

tunity to speak to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who would speak to her husband about it. I am afraid we shall not come home for this long time. I long to see dear Lucy. The Arbuthnots are very kind to me. I have got a room in Paris. Hale is better behaved. I have had a horse shot. Tell all about the ———'s. If you want money for them, don't ask me for it, but take my allowance for them; because, with a little care, I could live on my father's till their business is a little settled. Now do as I ask you — mind you do; for they have always been so kind to us all, and, if I can make any return, I should be a devil if I did not; so take my next quarter, and, as you may want to give them some, do that for my sake. I am very well. God bless you!

[Signed] "FRED. FITZCLARENCE.

"P. S. Sophia will write to you on Thursday."

Paris.

Addressed — "To Mrs. James,
"Post-Office, Boulogne,
"France."

Mrs. Jordan herself wrote to the offending party in very tender terms; but it would be improper to do more than allude to the asylum she holds out

to the wife, if she herself "can ever return to England." But let me follow her in her course, as she was traced by Sir Jonah's affectionate curiosity.

From Boulogne it appears, "after paying her *louage* like a goddess," she proceeded to Versailles, and subsequently, in still greater secrecy, to St. Cloud. There, totally secluded, and under the name of Johnson, she awaited, in still growing anxiety, the completion of an adjustment, which never took place. It was unfortunate, with the sincere regard for Mrs. Jordan that Sir Jonah undoubtedly bore, that this ill-starred seclusion was so strict that she seems to have lain like a culprit expecting the officers of justice, though in personal safety. Had she gone abroad, the worthy knight must have met her; had she retained her own name, he must have heard of her. As an able advocate, indeed a learned judge, a gentleman and attached friend, he would soon have reduced her anxieties within more reasonable bounds, and by fortifying her mind have considerably lightened her bodily complaint. Her disorder was jaundice, called by the French, *la maladie noire*. Exercise was vital in such a case. Everything should have been cheerful around her. On the contrary, her

very habitation at St. Cloud was a disease. Let us read the diagnostics, as stated by Sir Jonah.

"The apartments she occupied at St. Cloud were in a house in the square adjoining the palace. This house was large, gloomy, cold and inconvenient, just the sort of place which would tell in description in romance. In fact it looked to me almost in a state of dilapidation. I could not, I am sure, wander over it at night without a superstitious feeling. The rooms were numerous but small; the furniture scanty, old, and tattered. The hotel had obviously once belonged to some nobleman, and a long, lofty, flagged gallery stretched from one wing of it to the other. Mrs. Jordan's chambers were shabby; no English comforts solaced her in her latter moments! In her little drawing-room, a small old sofa was the best-looking piece of furniture. On this she constantly reclined, and on this she died. The garden, in her time, was overgrown with weeds, and two melancholy cypress-trees pointed, and almost confined her reflections, to the grave."

In its improved state, seen in a cheerful day, with an English family residing in one of its wings, and the garden cultivated, the learned writer adds that "were the mansion presented to him on the

condition he would not reside in it one month." I should like to know who chose such a situation for Mrs. Jordan. Why near a royal palace at all? Was it to remind her of Bushy, and the society and the comforts she had enjoyed for twenty years? Did it suit the "gloomy habit of her soul?" It should not have been indulged. Was her languishing frame to be hidden in a sepulchre, to preserve her person from her creditors? She had none so remorseless, as deserted and stately seats of nobles passed away; grass-grown in the walks of former happiness and health; the long bleak gallery that opened to her from the sofa, and the beckoning cypresses, that allured her, and closed the prospect in this world upon her.

The master of the house, a Mr. C—— (why his name is thus guarded I know not; I asked it myself in another quarter, and an answer was cautiously declined), — the master of the house gave to Sir Jonah an account of her last moments. He, too, with the *nommée*, Madame Ducamp, thought her poor, and offered her the use of money. This was of course declined, for it was not needed. Her seeming penury of circumstances was perfectly irreconcilable with the superb diamond ring she constantly wore. To his feeling she

must have resembled some crazed representative of the ancient *noblesse* of his country in poverty and exile, who had preserved the costly bauble of former splendour, and "saved only that;" who would part with the hand itself sooner than what adorned it, and was contented to perish, so that she bore the symbol of departed greatness useless to the grave. Mrs. Jordan gave herself four hundred guineas for this superb ring. I could not have suspected so much weakness. She, it appears, had other valuable trinkets in her possession at St. Cloud.

From her arrival she had always appeared in restless anxiety for news from England; her uneasiness increased hourly upon her, and latterly her skin became wholly discoloured. From morning till night she lay sighing upon her sofa. At length an interval of some posts elapsed, during which she received no answers to her letters, and her consequent anxiety seemed too great for mortal strength to bear up against. On the morning of her death this impatient feeling reached its crisis. The words used now by Mr. C—— become of the greatest value. "The agitation was almost fearful: her eyes were now restless, now fixed, her motion rapid and unmeaning, and her

whole manner seemed to bespeak the attack of some convulsive paroxysm." She eagerly requested Mr. C—— to go for her letters before the usual hour of delivery. On his return she started up and held out her hand, as if impatient to receive them. He told her "there were none." "She stood a moment motionless, looked toward him with a vacant stare, held out her hand again as if by an involuntary action, instantly withdrew it, and sank back upon the sofa from which she had risen. Mr. C—— now left the room to send up her attendant, but she had gone out; he therefore himself returned to Mrs. Jordan. On approaching her he observed some change in her looks that alarmed him. She spoke not a word, but gazed at him steadfastly. She wept not — no tear flowed. Her face was one moment flushed, another livid. She sighed deeply, and her heart seemed bursting. Mr. C—— stood, uncertain what to do; but in a minute he heard her breath drawn more hardly, and, as it were, sobbingly. He was now thoroughly terrified; he hastily approached the sofa, and, leaning over the unfortunate lady, discovered that those deep-drawn sobs had immediately preceded the moment of Mrs. Jordan's dissolution. She was already no more!"

Nothing is said of the attendant, how soon or how late she returned. Nothing is said of any resort to the faculty, as is common in such cases, that, after trying the usual resources of their art in convulsive spasms, they might ultimately pronounce the actual extinction of life. Mr. C—— was satisfied that she was no more, and, after all, Mrs. Jordan, it seems, was really not dead. Toward the latter end of June a letter was received, written by Mrs. Jordan's companion to one of her daughters, informing her that "after a few days' illness that lady had died at St. Cloud." At the same time the death was announced in some of the morning journals. Mr. Barton himself, in his letter, shortly to follow in this work, says that she died in the month of June. Her daughter was dreadfully shocked, as may be supposed, at the intelligence; at the time it arrived a month had not elapsed since her own *accouchement*. Three days after the first tidings a second letter was received from the same writer, saying that "she had been deceived by Mrs. Jordan's appearance; that she was alive, but very ill."

Immediate preparations were now made for this daughter's going to her mother; but before they could be completed a third letter arrived announc-

ing that "Mrs. Jordan was really dead." General Hawker himself then went to Paris to ascertain the fact, and, I believe, arrived there about three days after the interment had taken place.

I think it should be inferred from the above, that the first letter of the attendant was written under the impression of Mrs. Jordan's condition, described by Mr. C—— to Sir Jonah Barrington; because, had the adieu and recall to life preceded that person's crisis, it is strange that he did not mention it, in his elaborate and pathetic story; and if it succeeded it, there is equal difficulty in accounting for his total forgetfulness of so remarkable a circumstance.

Indeed, about the period in question there was a notion that, so far from her being dead, Mrs. Jordan had been met by various persons in London, and I myself was very strongly impressed with a notion that I had seen her. The dear lady was not an every-day sort of woman. Not that there were not persons who resembled her; for some such I knew, who had more than a slight resemblance in features, and who, to enhance their own attractions, copied her smile, and a peculiar action of the mouth, which was full of effect, and pointed an ironical sentence. But

there is a physiognomy so minute, if we will observe, as to decide the almost indifferent actions of the human character. She was near-sighted, and wore a glass attached to a gold chain about her neck; her manner of using this to assist her sight was extremely peculiar. I was taking a very usual walk before dinner, and I stopped at a bookseller's window on the left side of Piccadilly, to look at an embellishment to some new publication that struck my eye. On a sudden a lady stood by my side, who had stopped with a similar impulse: to my conviction it was Mrs. Jordan. As she did not speak, but dropped a long white veil immediately over her face, I concluded that she did not wish to be recognised, and therefore, however I should have wished an explanation of what so surprised me, I yielded to her pleasure upon the occasion, grounded, I had no doubt, upon sufficient reasons.

When I returned to my own house, at dinner-time, I mentioned the circumstance at table, and the way in which it struck me is still remembered in the family. I used, on the occasion, the strong language of Macbeth, "If I stand here, I saw her." It was but very recently I heard, for the first time, that one of her daughters, Mrs. Alsop,

had, to her entire conviction, met her mother in the Strand, after the report of her death; that the reality, or the fancy, threw her into fits at the time; and that, to her own death, she believed that she had not been deceived. With her, indeed, it was deemed a vision, a spectral appearance at noon-day, which I need not say was not my impression in the rencontre with myself. I have had, it is true, some ghostly intercourse, as a dramatic author; but Voltaire, no mean authority as a poet, has never rendered by his Semiramis a noon-day spectre either terrible or credible.

Whatever becomes of the above, I cannot doubt that every care has been taken to ascertain the facts attendant upon her illness, her medical friend, her spasmodic suffering, her death and burial.

How she was attended to her grave, we are not informed, but she was buried by Mr. Forster, the chaplain to the English ambassador, in the cemetery of St. Cloud.

For years no stone told where she lay, and some of her English friends at Paris (at Paris!) entered into a determination to remove the body to *Père la Chaise*, and place a marble over her grave. Some mistaken ideas of delicacy (well

termed such) at that time suspended its execution. I suppose these people imagined that grants of money as easily followed the deaths of those who delight as those who destroy mankind! That we should have had our inimitable Jordan's remains transferred from France to England, and, bursting the cloud that covered them, shine in the noblest cemetery of the world, by the side of her great predecessor, Anne Oldfield. For was it not equally true of Jordan as of Oldfield?

"In comœdia autem
Tanta vis, tam venusta hilaritas, tam curiosa
Felicitas,
Ut neque sufficerent spectando oculi,
Neque plaudendo manus."

And happily for herself that, in her private character, she equally possessed, with Mrs. Oldfield, —

"Judgment, which every little fault could spy;
But candour, that would pass a thousand by:
Whilst every social virtue fir'd her breast,
To help the needy, succour the distrest;
A friend to all in misery she stood,
And her chief pride was plac'd in doing good."

Lines which I imagine poor Savage wrote, with the tears of gratitude streaming from his eyes.

At length, however, the design settled, in cover-

ing the grave at St. Cloud, with no "rude and nameless stone," but one which, in the language of ancient Rome, attempts her character, something in the manner of Mrs. Oldfield's epitaph, and is only mistaken in her age. I rely fully upon the accurate recollection of my friend, Pryse Lockhart Gordon, Esq., who, as a military man, remembers being at Cork, in the year 1778, on the recruiting service, and says she was then in her seventeenth year; she died therefore aged fifty-four.

THE INSCRIPTION.

"Memoriæ Sacrum
DOROTHEÆ JORDAN,
Quæ per multos annos Londini,
Inque aliis Britanniæ urbibus,
Scenam egregiè ornavit.
Lepore comico, vocis suavitate,
Puellarum hilarium alteriusque sexus
Moribus habitu imitandis nulla secunda:
Ad exercendam eamque
Dum feliciter versata est artem,
Ut res egenorum adversas sublevarit
Nemo promptior.
E vitâ exiit 3°. nonas Julii, 1816,
Annos nata 50;
MEMENTOTE, LUGETE."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Administration to Mrs. Jordan's Effects — Announcement of Dividend — These Proceedings Explained — Mr. Barton Explains in a Letter Dated 1824 — The Author's Opinion of That Document — The Document Itself — Some Remarks upon It Inserted Impartially, Rather Than from Any Impression in Their Favour.

THE first measure after Mrs. Jordan's death was the administration to her effects. As she died in France intestate, the king's solicitor, *ex officio*, collected them. Accordingly letters of administration to Mrs. J.'s effects were taken out at Doctors' Commons, by the Treasury solicitor, 24th May, 1817, and the property sworn to be under £300.

But it was not until nearly seven years had elapsed, that anything like a settlement of her affairs could be announced to her creditors. However, on the 8th of December, 1823, the following advertisement appeared in the *Morning Post*, and I suppose in other journals:

"DOROTHEA JORDAN, DECEASED. — The creditors of Dorothea Jordan, late of Englefield Green, and Cadogan

Place, Sloane Street, in the County of Middlesex, spinster, deceased, who have proved their debts, may receive a dividend of five shillings in the pound, by applying at the office of the Solicitor to the Treasury, No. 5, Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn. And those creditors who have not yet proved their debts, are requested forthwith to furnish the Solicitor of the Treasury with proof thereof."

This payment having been construed into a composition, and made the pretence of a fierce and calumnious attack upon a royal personage, it was very properly denounced and confuted in the following article, and the friends of the noble duke invited to vindicate his character from such assaults, which became credited, because they were not from authority contradicted.

"MRS. JORDAN.

"Sunday, Jan. 4, 1824.

"A paragraph is now in progress through the newspapers, stating that the debts of this lamented and interesting lady have been compounded for five shillings in the pound, which is now in course of payment. This statement is not correct: Mrs. Jordan died intestate in France; the consequence of which is, her property vests in the Crown, and it has become the duty of the king's solicitor to

collect her effects, and apply them in the first instance to the payment of her debts. He has done this, and announced a payment to the extent stated. This is the fact, but it is not a composition of the lady's debts; the same course would be adopted in the case of any other British subject dying abroad intestate. But perhaps it would not have been necessary to notice the misrepresentation, were it not for the use to which it is applied by some of the public prints, in which it is made the ground of a bitter invective against a royal personage, formerly connected with that interesting female, by many dear and intimate ties. Nothing can be more unfounded than the charge, in which it is stated that she was left totally unprovided — to pine and die in want in a foreign land. Mrs. Jordan enjoyed an income of £2,000 a year, settled upon her by the royal duke. It was paid quarterly at Coutts's bank, in the Strand, and the last quarter, which did not become due until after her death, was received by a lady, formerly a governess at Bushy, and afterward resident with her as a companion in France, who came over to London for the purpose. But the report of the total abandonment and destitution of Mrs. Jordan is not new; it has been so long and frequently re-

ported, and suffered to pass without contradiction, it is now received as truth in every circle. That it has not been noticed by some of the friends of the royal personage aspersed, may excite surprise. We feel it our duty, however, to expose the misrepresentation, without regard to the wishes of the friends of his Royal Highness. The exposure is due to the cause of truth, it is due to the country which has an interest in the character of the illustrious individual so near to the throne, which could not belong to the case of a subject, however important, of inferior rank."

At length Mr. Barton, of the Royal Mint, took upon himself the task of doing justice to his illustrious master, stating the actual provision he had made for Mrs. Jordan, and the female children by her; Mrs. Jordan's own avowal to the same effect, the settlement of everything in the shape of a money transaction between the duke and herself, with interest up to the time, the payment of the balance to Mrs. Jordan, by himself, and the taking from her an acknowledgment for the same. He then proceeds to detail the renewal of Mrs. Jordan's correspondence with him, and the communication of what she had suffered from a relation.

He publishes her own letters, and they will be read with the deepest interest. He notices the alteration made by her death in the duke's arrangements, and states that his bounty conferred what he no longer was pledged to continue. It is an admirable document.

"THE LATE MRS. JORDAN.

"*To the Editor.*

"SIR: — The attention of the public has lately, as it has many times before, been drawn, by notices in the daily papers, to the case of the late Mrs. Jordan, and much pains have been taken to stigmatise the conduct of an illustrious personage, as it relates to that celebrated and much esteemed favourite of the public. These censures upon the conduct of the Duke of Clarence have been often repeated, and as often treated with silence upon the part of his Royal Highness's friends. This silence has, however, been construed by many into an admission of the accusations, till at length the stories so often told of Mrs. Jordan's having been obliged to leave her country and fly to a neighbouring kingdom, where, it is said, she died insolvent, for want of a trifling allowance being made to her by the duke, are assumed as facts.

"It has gone on thus until some persons have exclaimed, 'Has the Duke of Clarence no friend, who, if the accusations are groundless, can rescue the character of his Royal Highness from such gross calumny?' All who know the duke or his connections intimately, are acquainted with the truth; but none being so fully possessed of the whole case as myself, I feel that any further forbearance would amount to a dereliction of duty on my part, and, therefore, in justice to a much injured character, I take upon myself to submit the following statement to the public, acquainting them, in the first place, that it was through my hands the whole transaction upon the separation of the duke and Mrs. Jordan passed; that it was at my suggestion Mrs. Jordan adopted the resolution of leaving this country for France, to enable her the more readily and honourably to extricate herself from the troubles into which she had fallen through a misplaced confidence, and that I possess a correspondence with Mrs. Jordan subsequent to her leaving England, which corroborates my statement in the minutest points. Upon the separation which took place between Mrs. Jordan and the duke, in the year 1811, it was agreed that she should have the care, until a certain age, of her

four youngest daughters,[1] and a settlement was made by the duke for the payment by him of the following amounts:

"For the maintenance of his four daughters .	£1,500
For a house and carriage for their use . .	600
For Mrs. Jordan's own use	1,500
And to enable Mrs. Jordan to make a provision for her married daughters, children of a former connection	800
In all	£4,400

"This settlement was carried into effect, a trustee was appointed, and the monies under such

[1] The family of Mrs. Jordan by the duke consisted of ten children. I transcribe the list, as it appeared on a late occasion in the public prints.

Colonel Fitzclarence of the 7th Fusileers, married, in 1821, Lady Augusta Boyle, daughter of the Earl of Glasgow; and Col. George Fitzclarence is son-in-law to the Earl of Egremont. Capt. Adolphus Fitzclarence, R. N., and the Rev. Augustus Fitzclarence, rector of Maple Durham, are unmarried. Capt. Henry Fitzclarence died in India.

Miss Elizabeth Fitzclarence married the Earl of Errol.

" Augusta . . . . the Hon J. E. Kennedy.

" Sophia . . . . Mr. Philip Sidney, M. P.

" Mary . . . . Lieut.-Col. Charles Fox.

There is still a Miss Fitzclarence unmarried, whom report has assigned to Lord Viscount Falkland, with the perfect approbation of her royal father. I sincerely wish the young lady all happiness. THE AUTHOR.

trust were paid quarterly to the respective accounts at the banking-house of Messrs. Coutts & Co. It was a stipulation in the said settlements, that in the event of Mrs. Jordan resuming her profession, the care of the duke's four daughters, together with the £1,500 per annum for their maintenance, should revert to his Royal Highness; and this event actually did take place, in the course of a few months, in consequence of Mrs. Jordan's desire to accept certain proposals made to her to perform. Mrs. Jordan did resume her profession; and, not long after, reflections were thrown out against both the duke and herself; whereupon Mrs. Jordan, indignant at such an attack upon his Royal Highness, wrote the following letter, which was published in the papers of the day:[1]

[1] I should feel but little disposed to accompany Mrs. Jordan through her two last seasons at Covent Garden Theatre; for who likes to see the struggles of the brightest powers in their decay; but on her commencement, as Violante, in February, 1813, an attack of so brutal a nature was published in one of the daily papers, that she was compelled, by her sense of gratitude, to notice it; and if the writer ever did blush, I will honour him by supposing a suffusion of this sort, at the perusal of the letter now above reprinted.

The audience, in any character that afforded personal application, testified suitable indignation at the baseness she had ex-

"'SIR: — Though I did not see the morning print that contained the paragraph alluded to in your liberal and respectable paper of yesterday, yet I was not long left in ignorance of the abuse it poured out against me; this I could silently have submitted to, but I was by no means aware that the writer of it had taken the opportunity of throwing out insinuations which he thought might be injurious to a no less honourable than illustrious personage.

"'In the love of truth, and in justice to his Royal Highness, I think it my duty publicly and unequivocally to declare that his liberality toward me has been noble and generous in the highest degree; but, not having it in his power to extend his bounty beyond the term of his own existence, he has, with his accustomed goodness and consideration, allowed me to endeavour to make that

posed by her letter. The last new part she played was in a comedy, written by Kenney, called "Debtor and Creditor." I have quite forgotten the state of his account with Mrs. Jordan for Barbara; indeed, I remember nothing of Barbara herself: no more I suppose does he by this time.

She is said to have played at the English Theatre in Brussels, in September, 1814, and she certainly acted, in July and August, 1815, ten nights at Margate; where she had often appeared in her prouder days. And thus closed the existence of our Thalia theatrically. THE AUTHOR.

provision for myself, which an event, that better feelings than those of interest make me hope I shall never live to see, would entirely deprive me of.

"'This, then, sir, is my motive for returning to my profession. I am too happy in having every reason to hope and believe that, under these circumstances, I shall not offend the public at large by seeking their support and protection; and, while I feel that I possess those, I shall patiently submit to that species of unmanly persecution which a female so particularly situated must always be subject to. Ever ready to acknowledge my deficiencies in every respect, I trust I may add that I shall never be found wanting in candour and gratitude, not forgetful of the care that every individual should feel for the good opinion of the public. I am, sir,

"'Your much obliged, humble servant,

"'DORA JORDAN.'

"It should have been before stated that, upon settling the annual allowance to Mrs. Jordan, everything in the shape of a money transaction was brought to account, and that the most trifling sums even, upon recollection, were admitted; and

interest being calculated upon the whole, in her favour, to the latest period, the balance was paid over by me, on the part of the duke, and for which I hold Mrs. Jordan's receipt. It should also be understood that, up to the day of their separation, Mrs. Jordan had received a large annual allowance from his Royal Highness.

"A cessation of correspondence between Mrs. Jordan and myself ensued, until September, 1815, when I most unexpectedly received a note from her, requesting to see me immediately. I found her in tears, and under much embarrassment, from a circumstance that had burst upon her, as she said, 'like a thunder storm.' She found herself involved to a considerable amount by securities, which all at once appeared against her, in the form of bonds and promissory notes, given incautiously by herself, to relieve, as she thought, from trifling difficulties, a near relation, in whom she had placed the greatest confidence.

"Acceptances had been given by her in blank, upon stamped paper, which she supposed were for small amounts, but which afterward appear to have been laid before her capable of carrying larger sums.

"She was fearful of immediate arrest. She

wished to treat all her claimants most fairly and honourably, and to save, if possible, the wife and children of the person who had so deceived her, from utter ruin. She could not enter into negotiations with her creditors unless at large, and apprehending that, if she remained in England, that would not long be the case, she instantly adopted the resolution before mentioned, of going to France.

"A list of creditors was made out, and an arrangement was in progress to enable her to return to this country. All she required, in order to set her mind at ease on the extent of the demands that might be out against her, was that the person who had plunged her into all these difficulties should declare, upon oath, that the list he had given to her included the whole. This the party from time to time refused to do; and disappointed thus in the hope she had so fondly cherished, of again returning to this country and seeing those children for whom she had the most tender affection, she sunk under the weight of her afflictions, and in the month of June, 1816, died at St. Cloud.[1]

"In support of the foregoing narrative, the

[1] No. She died on the 3d of July. — AUTHOR.

writer has the most incontestable evidence, but he trusts nothing can be more satisfactory or convincing to the public than the following extract from a letter addressed by Mrs. Jordan to him, dated at Paris, 18th January, 1816:

"'DEAR SIR:—I have forborne writing to you that I might occupy as little of your time as possible. My spirits are in so disturbed a state, that my weak hand is scarcely able to trace the still more feeble efforts of my mind . . . He assures you that I am in possession of the names of my creditors, to whom he has made me answerable by filling up those blank acceptances that I so unguardedly gave him, and yet declines making an oath to that purpose. This has caused me much uneasiness, for it appears to me vague, if not equivocal.

"'I can solemnly declare that the names I sent to you are the only ones I know of, and the greater part utter strangers to me.

"'I was in hopes that, not only out of humanity and justice to me, but for his own sake, he would have done it voluntarily, as it would have been the means of removing in a great degree the unpleasant impressions such a determination might

cause in the minds of those who still remain anxious for his future well-doing. I do not command or enforce it, but entreat it, as the only relief he can give to a being he has almost destroyed . . . What interpretation can be put on his refusal? If he says he will not take the oath, it is cruel, and, if he add that he cannot, what is to become of me? Is it, in nature, possible for me to return to an uncertain home with all the horrors I have suffered there fresh on my mind; with the constant dread of what may be hurrying over me? I really think (under those circumstances) that when my presence would be absolutely necessary, that it would not remain in my own power to be able to encounter such misery. It is not, believe me, the feelings of pride, avarice, or the absence of those comforts I have all my life been accustomed to, that is killing me by inches; it is the loss of my only remaining comfort, the hope I used to live on, from time to time of seeing my children. The above assertion I can convince the world of, if driven to it, by leaving the bond (all I have) to the creditors, and the duke's generous allowance to the decision of the law.

"'It is now, and ever has been, my wish to

save ———, for even now I feel a regard for him I cannot conquer; but surely I may expect some return of gratitude from a man who by a single act could relieve those fears that are nearly insupportable. The idea is shocking.

"'Excuse this long letter, but I am sure you will see and feel the motives and the urgency. Once more, dear sir, forgive and excuse,

"'Yours,

"'DORA JORDAN.'

"With the death of Mrs. Jordan ceased the allowance which, by his Royal Highness's means, she was enabled to make up £200 a year to each of her three married daughters. Surely, then, no blame can attach to the Duke of Clarence, whose liberality, in order to enable Mrs. Jordan to make a suitable provision for them in the event of her death, has been acknowledged by her to have been 'most noble and generous in the highest degree.'

"All sorts of means were resorted to by one of the parties (now no more) to compel a continuance of these allowances. The duke did not choose to be driven in this respect, but when the importunity, from inefficacy of threats, had died away,

his Royal Highness, of his own generous accord, did give to each his kind assistance, and I am to this day paying, and, as long as it shall be his Royal Highness's pleasure, shall continue to pay, annual gratuities to the two surviving daughters.

"Who then, after this statement of facts, shall accuse the Duke of Clarence with want of generosity toward Mrs. Jordan or her memory?

"The administration of the effects of Mrs. Jordan by the solicitor of the treasury was ex-officio, and the advertisement which appeared in the papers, and which has called forth this last attack, was put in in regular discharge of the duties of his administration.

"I must conclude with one assurance, that, after having given a true and, I trust, candid recital of facts, I shall treat with contempt anything further that may be said on this subject; resting satisfied if, after an attachment of six and thirty years' service to a good and generous master, I shall have added anything to his comfort in convincing a single individual of the injustice he has sustained.

"I am, sir, etc.,

"JOHN BARTON.

"*Royal Mint, Jan. 21, 1824.*"

Mrs. Jordan.

"To John Barton, Esq., 'six and thirty years servant' to his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence.

"SIR:—As I have no doubt that the paper appearing in the morning prints, with your signature, was intended to become part and portion of the public record, I will offer no apology for troubling you with this letter. As a state document, put into wide circulation, to explain away the charges which have been preferred against one of the blood royal, between whom and the throne of these realms there is but one slender life, toward a lovely, yet ill-fated creature, it is deserving of respect; and, as an answer to some remarks introduced in a former number of this paper, it is entitled to some observations. Yet, anxious as I most truly am, that the character of your amiable and illustrious master should come forth pure and unalloyed from the ordeal of criticism, and that you yourself, 'after an attachment of six and thirty years to a good and generous master,' should be the happy instrument of contributing to this end, I must be excused from going along with all the

conclusions contained in your address. I am inclined, in the first place, to think, though the opinion of the world be against me, that the long and continued connection which subsisted between your illustrious master and Mrs. Jordan, was, in the eye of morality, equivalent to a marriage, and as such it was registered in heaven.

"It is true that the Royal Marriage Act, the policy of which may well be doubted, does certainly bar the house of Brunswick from allying any of its princely members even to the highest dame in the country, and that far less could a young, beautiful, and accomplished female commoner ever aspire to be lighted to the bridal chamber by the torch of Hymen; still, the interchange of affection, the communication of interests, the sharing of the honours of table and bed, the birth of children, are acts and circumstances which can be but feebly supported by the mere formal nuptial tie. It is not the pronouncing of a few set phrases, no, nor the conformity to a legal and outward mark of intention, that can beget so wide and dreary a vacuum in the intercourse of the sexes. Man clings to woman — his feelings and his wants attach him to her; and woman, fond, relying woman, leaves the guardian of her youth, and the

sworn protector of her riper years, for him who captivates her heart and holds out the hand of welcome and protection. To Mrs. Jordan this hand was freely extended, and many, many were the years during which she lay in the bosom of your illustrious master. But 'tis truly said, —

"'Affection changes as the mood inclines;'

the domestic comforts began to wax cold, and a separation took place. What advice should you have then offered to your master? Ought you not to have dissuaded him, by kindling the sparks of half-buried love, from allowing a creature, now shorn of her attractions, and worn down by cares and toils in his services, again to offer herself before the public? You will answer, that ample provisions were made to avert this necessity. These, indeed, look fair upon paper, but what are the conditions with which they were clogged? If Mrs. Jordan were to return to the stage, £2,200 were to be struck off, for her daughters' portions and equipages, and she was to shun their society. Does a mother love to be torn from her offspring? Distracted between the two alternatives, either to lose their company, or to give up the hope of earning a livelihood for the children of Mr. Jordan, and

of securing some independence, should his Grace be called to his audit, she at length preferred the latter course. Fifteen hundred pounds, therefore, became her sole dependence, but scarcely had she begun her career, than this sum was snatched from her by an unfortunate guarantee. She was therefore destitute. With your approbation she fled to France, and there lived in want and misery. Your amiable and illustrious master was not ignorant of her embarrassments, yet they were unheeded. How they affected her the letter she wrote from St. Cloud is too melancholy an evidence: 'My weak hand,' says she, 'is scarcely able to trace the still more feeble efforts of my mind.' It is well known that she sunk under the pressure of her situation; foreigners supplied her with rags to cover her squalid and emaciated frame, and the benevolence of foreigners was taxed to lay her ashes in the tomb.[1] Why did not you, sir, communicate these circumstances to your master? Why did not you say that the annuity was to her a sealed book, that she was wretched and forlorn in a foreign land? Had your amiable and illustri-

[1] Surely this is violent exaggeration. All these rags flutter only in the writer's imagination. She never wanted anything, and her companion was a gentlewoman. — AUTHOR.

ous master heard this tale of woe, he must have flown to her relief, repaid the large sums which he had drawn from her theatrical talents, or at least taken some steps to withdraw the arrest upon the annuity. Surely you must have known that a slanderous world would have interpreted your apathy into the apathy of your patron, and that there was risk, however pure and spotless the house of Brunswick is, of a shadow passing across the lustre of one of its brightest ornaments. And busy tongues, too, might have said that the bond had a careful provision, by which legal or voluntary assignees were to annul its efficacy, and that the prospect of these had swayed the noble-hearted and munificent granter in amplifying its contents. Unjustifiable and malicious as these allusions were, the credulous public might have given them ear, and it was your duty to have prevented them. You are not entitled, in exculpation, to plead the profuse allowance of two hundred pounds sterling afterward granted to Mrs. Jordan's daughters. Is it any excuse to an ungrateful country that monuments are reared and pæans sung to one whose lamp had expired for lack of the oil of subsistence?

"The Athenians honoured their Socrates after compelling him to drink the hemlock-juice.

"But I have said enough to show the tender anxiety I feel for the character and conduct of your amiable and illustrious master, and how sincerely I wish that his manifold virtues should shine as conspicuously as his rank.

"Yours, etc.,

"HAMANUS."

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE arrived at the proper termination of these memoirs. And, with a few considerations that press themselves forward upon revising my labours, I shall close these volumes.

That the existence of Mrs. Jordan might have been somewhat prolonged, under circumstances less annoying, is possible. But her real life, like that of every other divinity of our fancies, ceased with its worshippers.

The separation, in 1811, greatly shocked and distressed her mind — she never, in fact, recovered it. The woman, in her, was too powerful for the genius. In the meantime, nature herself was beginning to pronounce a limit to her professional excellence. Devoted as an actress to the gay exhibition of youth, it was impossible for her to be a veteran on the stage.

The leading events of her private life have been, for the first time, illustrated by authentic and indisputable documents. And as a judge, in

reading over to the jury his minutes of the evidence, though he leaves to their wisdom the whole of the case, may allow his own impressions to be here and there inferred, so, through the interesting occurrences of her life, my own feeling occasionally would not be concealed. But I willingly trust the professional and personal merits of Mrs. Jordan to the taste, the judgment, the sympathy, and, above all, the candour of the public.

THE END.

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